

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

EXTENSION

## Center for Youth Development

270B McNamara Alumni Center  
200 Oak Street SE  
Minneapolis, MN 55455-2022

PHONE  
(612) 624-2116  
(800) HHH-H238

FAX  
(612) 624-6905

WEB  
<http://www.fourh.umn.edu>  
[www.extension.umn.edu](http://www.extension.umn.edu)

### 4-H Volunteers/Staff:

Welcome to the new “4-H Club Management Guide.” This is our attempt to help insure that you have a successful experience as you support the 4-H program and the young people who have chosen our organization for their youth development experience. Yes, like you, we recognize that young people and their caring adults have choices in deciding which youth organization to join; the 4-H program does not wish to take either decision for granted.

First we thank you for joining us in this important work—mentoring, teaching and serving as role models for our 4-H members. We value your involvement—our young people need adult role models. We thank you for stepping forward and making the commitment to help 4-H members dream, plan, set goals, and look forward to the future.

It is important to us that you have a successful experience and that our young people gain knowledge and skills as a result of your involvement. Hence, we intend to leave nothing to chance or happenstance. We therefore ask that you take this guide seriously; learn and apply the information provided in your 4-H club setting(s); and enjoy the journey as you have been entrusted to nurture and mentor our most precious commodity—our young people.

Sincerely,



Dorothy McCargo Freeman  
State 4-H Program Leader & Assistant Director  
Center for Youth Development  
University of Minnesota

# **MN 4-H Club Management Guide**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

### **Minnesota 4-H Club Design Team**

Brenda Shafer, Co-Chair, Area Program Leader, 4-H Youth Development,  
University of Minnesota Extension Service

Jim Deidrick, Co-Chair, Volunteer Leadership Development Educator, Center for 4-H  
Youth Development, University of Minnesota Extension Service

Brian McNeill, Regional Extension Educator, 4-H Youth Development, University of  
Minnesota Extension Service

Mary Marczak, Youth Development Evaluation Educator/Researcher, Center for 4-H  
Youth Development, University of Minnesota Extension Service

Janet Beyer, Regional Extension Educator, Community Youth Development, University  
of Minnesota Extension Service

Trisha Sheehan, Regional Extension Educator, 4-H Youth Development, University of  
Minnesota Extension Service

Jennifer Skuza, Director of Urban 4-H Programs, University of Minnesota Extension  
Service

Nickyia Cogshell, Urban Extension Educator, University of Minnesota Extension  
Service

Elaine Koyama, Group Consultant, Interlinx Associates, Edina, Minnesota

### **Members Emeritus**

Susan Fisher, Co-Chair, Intern Assistant Director, Center for 4-H Youth Development,  
University of Minnesota Extension Service

Leon Rodriguez, Multi-Cultural Educator, Center for 4-H Youth Development,  
University of Minnesota Extension Service

Marie Lee Rude, Regional Extension Educator, Center for 4-H Youth Development,  
University of Minnesota Extension Service

### **Project Manager**

Cindy Christopherson, Regional Extension Educator, 4-H Youth Development,  
University of Minnesota Extension Service

## **Editing and Review**

Becky Harrington, Clay County 4-H Program Coordinator, University of Minnesota  
Extension Service

Rebecca Meyer, Regional Extension Educator, 4-H Youth Development, University of  
Minnesota Extension Service

Sharon Davis, Regional Extension Educator, 4-H Youth Development, University of  
Minnesota Extension Service

Gladys Sanborn, MN 4-H Adult Volunteer Association

Melissa Kain Varno, Executive Administrative Specialist, 4-H Support, Moorhead  
Regional Center, University of Minnesota Extension Service

Colleen Harris, Executive Administrative Specialist, General Support, Moorhead  
Regional Center, University of Minnesota Extension Service

Dixie Shafer, Editorial Consultant

## **Technical Advisor**

Thom Sondreal, Senior Media Services Producer, University of Minnesota Extension  
Service

The Minnesota 4-H Club Design Team thanks the many talented Youth Development Educators and Support Staff who contributed to the creation of this Guide. May it help us all as we strive to provide club experience of the highest quality to the young people of Minnesota.

***Development of this Guide was made possible through financial support provided by the Minnesota 4-H Foundation and the Center for 4-H Youth Development at the University of Minnesota.***

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# 4-H Club Management Guide

## How to Use This Guide

As a volunteer/paid staff working with 4-Hers in MN, we hope that you find this Management Guide a useful tool for you and your club. This Guide is a collection of resources and practical information about the MN 4-H Youth Development Program. The following information may help you use the Guide more effectively.

The first three sections of the Management Guide, ***This is MN 4-H, Basic Facts About 4-H Clubs*** and ***Charter, Constitution & Bylaws*** helps you get grounded in the purpose of the 4-H program and how it helps youth grow.

When you are planning your meetings and wanting to get the most out of them, check section ***4-H Club Meeting & Program Planning*** for ideas. In addition, there are six sample meeting agendas provided in the Toolkit section. If you need help in keeping order at your meetings or need to find out if your club is on the right track, refer to the section ***Tips for Conducting Club Meetings***.

To better understand the youth you are working with, check out the section on ***Understanding Ages of Youth*** and ***Manage Group Activities for Safety, Efficiency, and Effective Learning***.

***Money Matters*** is a section that will answer your club financial questions.

Make sure you read the ***4-H Projects*** section so you can help guide your members in the selection of their projects and you understand the real purpose of projects.

To better understand your job as a volunteer/paid staff with the 4-H program, read ***Volunteering with 4-H*** section.

The last two sections ***Public Presentations*** and ***Community Service-Learning***, will give you a better understanding of these opportunities so you can encourage your members to get involved in these programs.

A very important part of this Guide is the accompanying ***Toolkit*** which includes many resources to help you as leader of your club.

# This Is Minnesota 4-H



**Mission Statement:** Minnesota 4-H Youth Development makes measurable impacts in the lives of Minnesota youth in out-of-school time.

**Vision Statement:** Minnesota 4-H Youth Development is recognized and respected by a broad cross-sector of audiences as a leader in the application of positive youth development through educational programs that balance research, design, and practice.

## Why 4-H?

4-H provides a chance for young people to belong – to be part of a group their own age, to learn new things and do fun things together. Through 4-H, young people have opportunities to:

- Learn new skills, gain knowledge, and develop positive attitudes.
- Develop and use their creative talents.
- Learn to make intelligent decisions and to solve problems.
- Develop a feeling of self-worth, while respecting the rights and privileges of others.

In brief, the purpose of 4-H is to provide a variety of learning experiences for youth that contribute to their personal growth and development and that will help them to become contributing, self-reliant, and responsible members of society.

## Essential Elements of 4-H

Youth development, the process of growing up and developing one's capacities, happens no matter what we do. The challenge is to promote positive youth development and plan quality experiences with young people. In 4-H, we use the following Essential Elements to accomplish this: *(National 4-H - Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture)*

### Belonging

Youth need to know they are cared about by others and feel a sense of connection to others in the group. This “fellowship” has always been an important part of a 4-H experience. 4-H gives youth the opportunity to feel physically and emotionally safe while actively participating in a group. Research suggests that a sense of belonging may be the single most powerful positive ingredient we can add into the lives of children and youth. This includes:

- Positive relationships with a caring adult.
- An inclusive environment.
- A safe environment.

### Mastery

To develop self-confidence youth need to feel and believe they are capable and must experience success at solving problems and meeting challenges. By exploring 4-H

**MAKE** the BEST  
**BETTER**

projects and activities, youth master skills to make positive career and life choices. To do so, youth must have access to quality research-based content and have the

opportunity to learn by doing. They also need a safe environment for making mistakes and getting feedback, not just through competition but also as an ongoing element of participation. Finally, youth need the breadth and depth of topics to pursue their own interests. To be successful, youth must have:

- Engagement in Learning.
- Opportunity for Mastery.

### **Independence**

Youth need to know that they are able to influence people and events through decision-making and action. By exercising independence through 4-H leadership opportunities, youth mature in self-discipline and responsibility, learn to better understand themselves and become independent thinkers. For Independence, youth must have the:

- Opportunity to see oneself as an active participant in the future.
- Opportunity for self-determination.

### **Generosity**

Youth need to feel their lives have meaning and purpose. By participating in 4-H community service and citizenship activities, youth connect to communities and learn to give back to others. It's clear that these experiences provide the foundation that helps us understand the "big picture" of life and find purpose and meaning. Community service projects allow 4-H club members to see that their effort to help others is important and valuable. Youth learn that they do not live in a secluded world, but in a global community, that requires awareness and compassion for others. To learn Generosity, youth must have an:

- Opportunity to value and practice service for others.

### **Minnesota 4-H Youth Development:**

A part of the University of Minnesota, offers a range of short and long term educational programs that meet the needs of young people from kindergarten through one year past high school. The 4-H Youth Development program invites all youth to participate. 4-H Adventures are short-term programs specialized by specific subject matters such as performing arts, technology, animal science, or nutrition and fitness. 4-H Clubs meet regularly in a sequence of at least six sessions in community or school settings encompassing a variety of learning topics. Minnesota 4-H also offers online, after school, youth leadership, camping, and other programs for varying lengths of time throughout the year. Older youth can be involved as volunteer leaders in their areas of interest. In result, all youth participating in any program offered by Minnesota 4-H Youth Development are considered 4-H members.

### **What Makes 4-H Different?**

4-H is unique because it is the only youth organization tied to the research base of our nation's land-grant university system. This connection allows Extension staff and the volunteers they work with to receive training based on the most up-to-date research on youth development theory and practice. 4-H club work is supported by a combination of federal, state and county funds. Substantial support also comes from private sources – local, state and national. Business and industry, farm and civic organizations and individuals support 4-H because they believe in the worth of the program. The National 4-H Council and the Minnesota 4-H Foundation are not-for-profit organizations that support the 4-H Youth Development Program by working to acquire resources.

## What's In It for Youth?

The Minnesota 4-H Youth Survey was conducted in 2001 to determine whether youth were experiencing positive youth development opportunities through their 4-H experiences and to assess their attitudes about school and community, risk indicators, and involvement in other activities. The survey revealed:

- **Through 4-H clubs, youth reported:**
  - \* A greater sense of belonging
  - \* Quality relationships with adults
  - \* Active parent involvement
- **Youth involved in 4-H are more likely to:**
  - \* Volunteer in their communities
  - \* Be involved in sports and fine arts
- **Youth involved in 4-H are less likely to have:**
  - \* Spent six or more hours per week watching TV or playing video and computer games
  - \* Stolen something
  - \* Damaged property
  - \* Smoked cigarettes
  - \* Consumed alcohol
  - \* Ridden in a car where the driver was drinking

The complete survey can be found on the University of Minnesota's Center for Youth Development web page at [www.fourh.umn.edu](http://www.fourh.umn.edu).



# Basic Facts About 4-H Clubs



## Club Goals

The goal of a 4-H club is long-term youth development that encourages participants to learn life skills that will help them grow into healthy and productive citizens.

Clubs aim to help youth:

- Develop a zest and skill for life long learning.
- Acquire confidence and a positive attitude toward self.
- Develop leadership, citizenship and teamwork skills.
- Explore possible vocations and careers.
- Learn to manage time wisely and set priorities.
- Interact with adults who serve as role models.

## Essential Club Elements

To help ensure a quality life, skill building experience for youth, The Center for Youth Development has the following guidelines or Essential Elements that should be part of every 4-H club experience.

Every club is expected to:

- Give members a chance to be an active part of the decision-making process at every meeting.
- Clearly state at least one goal decided through club programming.
- Provide all members the opportunity to publicly demonstrate their learning.

- Meet at least six times within a year.
- Maintain a minimum of three families and six members in the club.
- Support service-learning projects throughout the year that connect club members with the community.
- Ensure that all adult volunteers are screened.
- Maintain an adult-to-youth ratio of one to ten.
- Encourage and support family involvement.
- Support and provide opportunities for members to reflect on their 4-H experiences, i.e., record keeping, journaling, etc.
- Acknowledge and abide by the Equal Program Opportunity Statement of the University of Minnesota and abide by the policies and guidelines of The Center for Youth Development.
- The 4-H meeting will include:
  - \* Pledges
  - \* Roll call (attendance)
  - \* Educational topic
  - \* Business meeting
  - \* Recreation
  - \* Snack
  - \* Project work
  - \* Use of meeting management tools like Robert's Rules of Order or other group decision making models.
- Spend time during the year recognizing and celebrating the accomplishments of members.

- Utilize the curriculum and materials provided by The Center for Youth Development at the University of MN.

## 4-H Club Structures or “Types”

4-H clubs are groups of youth and adults who meet on a regular basis and together practice positive youth development and cooperative learning. Each club is supported with curriculum, training and development, and access to county, regional, state and national 4-H experiences.

All clubs carry out service projects that satisfy needs in the community (e.g., food drives, ESL tutoring, community beautification). These clubs meet regularly throughout the year on a schedule determined by club members. Regardless of the club type, all must abide by the Essential Club Elements (page 7).

- \* **Community Club** is a program initiated and facilitated by youth and adult volunteers in the context of community (e.g., neighborhood, township). Three or more families can comprise a community club. Gathering places may include community centers, synagogues, churches, homes and many other places.

Community Clubs aim to engage youth and adults in both individual and group activities that foster learning and development in a variety of subject matter areas (e.g., aerospace, computer science, international education.)

- \* **Project Club** is a program focused more deeply on specific subject matter (e.g., performing arts, animal science, photography). Project Clubs can operate within any school or community setting or as part of any of the other club types (e.g., site-based, afterschool and community). They can be facili-

tated by either volunteers or paid staff. Meeting schedules may vary within a short-term or year-long schedule. *Examples: 4-H Performing Arts Club, 4-H Shooting Sports Club, 4-H Computer Science Club, 4-H Spanish Club*

- \* **4-H Afterschool Club** is a program offered to youth following the school day. Afterschool Clubs are often divided by age groups (e.g., grades 3-4, grades 5-6).

4-H Afterschool Clubs aim to complement the learning and development that occurs during the school day and to extend learning during non-school hours. 4-H Afterschool Clubs are often a part of a broader after-school initiative and may have a wide variety of partners and resources that support the program operation. This club type is facilitated by paid staff and/or volunteers. The schedule complements the school calendar.

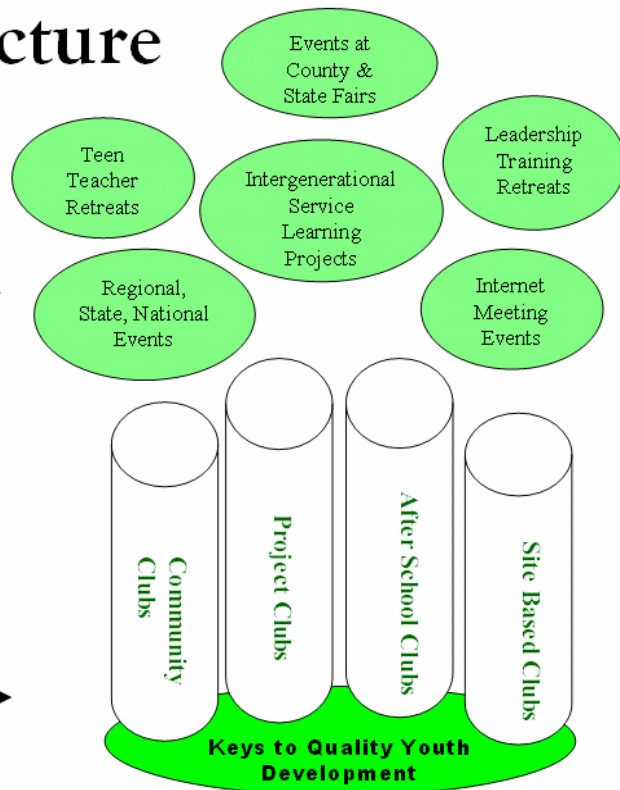
- \* **Site-Based Club** is designed to reach underserved youth in the communities where they live with year long programming. This could be a public housing site or neighborhood with a community center that can serve as the hosting location.

Depending on the makeup of the group, programming may be divided into two age categories (5-12 years and 13-19 years), with each group meeting separately on a weekly basis throughout the year. All age groups may also come together for intentional cross-age learning experiences. This method aims to build capacity among youth living in neighborhoods. This club is generally facilitated by paid staff, however, volunteers may also play key roles. There can be a variety of subject matter content areas.

# 4-H Club Structure

County, Regional, State and National Experiences provide “*Integration Points*” for club members.

“**Keys to Quality Youth Development**” must be the foundation of **all** 4-H club experiences.



## Community Clubs

- Typically form when a group of families, who often know each other and/or live in the same proximity, come together to form a 4-H club in their community.



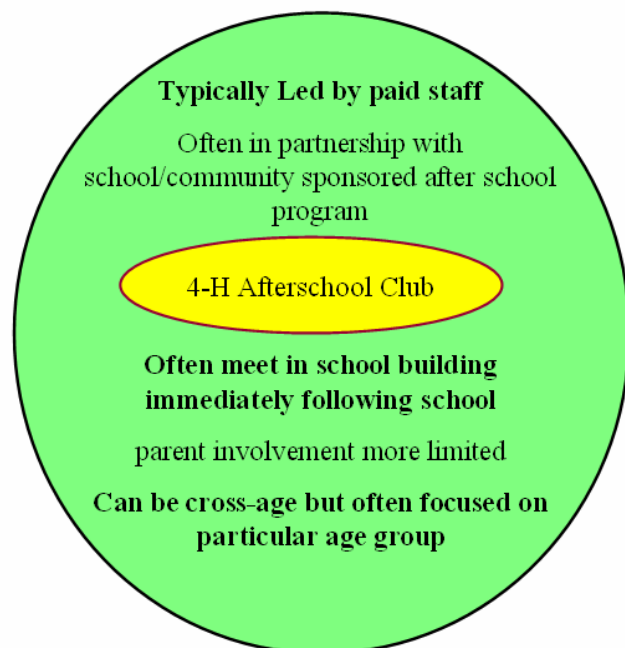
## Project Clubs

- Project Clubs are formed around, and focused on, a particular 4-H project area, (i.e., horse club, aerospace club, computer club, clowning club, shooting sports club, etc.).



## Afterschool Clubs

- A 4-H club experience offered in the after school hours. Clubs typically meet weekly or monthly throughout the school year.



# Site Based Clubs

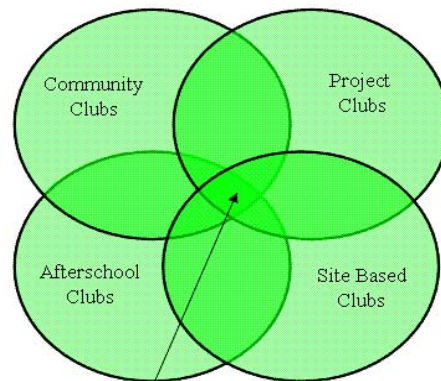
- A 4-H club experience designed to reach youth in communities where they live (i.e., public housing site, mobile home park, neighborhood community center or other host location).



## 4-H Club Types Have Much In Common

**Club structures are flexible sharing many similarities:**

- Community Clubs can meet after school
- Afterschool Clubs can focus on a project area
- A Site Based Club can meet in the after school hours
- Parents/guardians can organize and lead 4-H Afterschool Clubs



**“Key Elements”** of positive youth development are central to the experience in all 4 club structures

## Membership

Membership is open to all youth in kindergarten through 12th grade and one year beyond high school.

All clubs will be inclusive (not exclusive) and diverse.

## Equal Opportunity

Because the 4-H Youth Development Program is a component of the National Cooperative Extension System, which is supported by federal, state and county funds, it is governed by the equal opportunity laws of those three governmental entities. The University of Minnesota Extension Equal Opportunity Statement (below) is based on those regulations. 4-H clubs must abide by the standards the University sets.

*The University of Minnesota is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance, veteran status or sexual orientation.*

## 4-H Club Names

Members and leaders work together to select a name for a new 4-H club. Once your club is chartered (Toolkit 1), you will not want to change its name. Therefore, it is important that the name can stand the test of time—not too trendy or juvenile. Try to avoid names of TV cartoons, singing groups, situation comedies, etc. Also, the name should not imply membership is limited to any group protected by equal opportunity regulations. For example, names such as the 4-H Lads or Lassies, Kings or Queens would be inappropriate.

## 4-H Symbol

A green four-leaf clover with a white H on each leaf. The four H's stand for HEAD, HEART, HANDS and HEALTH. The stem must point to the right as you look at the image.



## Clover Usage

The 4-H clover is officially protected by the United States government. The situations in which it may be used, the manner in which it may be displayed, the text style and colors required for its reproduction are all specified. Given the complexity of the regulations, you should check with a 4-H staff member whenever you want to use the clover in exhibits, promotional materials, etc.

Use of the clover on items such as T-shirts, caps, key chains, mugs, pens, etc. must be approved by the Extension Educator. For routine display of the clover within your local club setting, observe these rules of usage:

- The four-leaf clover with stem must be in green and the letter “H” on each leaf in white.
- The stem must curve to the right.
- The 4-H clover must be given a place of prominence.
- It is not permissible to superimpose any letter, design or object on the 4-H Club Emblem or to materially alter its intended shape.

Please see *Using the 4-H Name and Emblem* (Toolkit 2) developed by the United States Department of Agriculture for more information.

## 4-H Pledge

I pledge-

My **HEAD** to clearer thinking,  
(right hand lightly touching head)

My **HEART** to greater loyalty,  
(right hand placed on chest like you're saying the Pledge of Allegiance)

My **HANDS** to larger service, and  
(both hands waist high, with palms up like a book)

My **HEALTH** to better living,  
(both hands along sides of body naturally)

For my family, my club, my community,  
my country, and my world.

Minnesota is unique when it comes to the 4-H Pledge. We are the only state to include *family* in the Pledge. T.A. (Dad) Erickson, the first state 4-H leader, was a strong believer in the importance of home and family to the 4-H program.

## 4-H Colors

The 4-H colors are green and white.

**White** symbolizes purity. **Green** represents life, new growth, springtime and youth.

## 4-H Motto

**“To Make the Best Better”**. The national 4-H motto, should be the objective of each 4-H leader and member.

## 4-H Slogan

**“Learning by Doing”**. The 4-H slogan is the educational philosophy of the 4-H program. Since young people learn best when they are actively involved in the learning process, 4-H projects are designed to provide hands-on experiences that are reinforced through personal and group reflection and Application— “do-reflect-apply.”



# Charter, Constitution & Bylaws



## Who Owns the 4-H Clover?

The 4-H club name and emblem are held in trust by the Secretary of Agriculture of the United States Department of Agriculture for the educational and character - building purposes of the 4-H program and can be used only as authorized by the statute and in accordance with the authorization of the Secretary or designated representative.

The 4-H club name and emblem may be used by authorized representatives of the United States Department of Agriculture, the Cooperative Extension, the land grant institutions, and the National 4-H Council.

Extension Administration may grant authorization for the use of the 4-H club name and emblem for educational or informational uses that the Cooperative Extension deems to be in the best interest of the 4-H program and that can be properly controlled by the Cooperative Extension.

Excerpts from: *The 4-H Name and Emblem: Guidelines for Authorized Use*, USDA.

## Why Do Clubs Need a Charter?

The State 4-H Leader and 4-H Extension Educator are authorized to grant use of the 4-H club name and emblem, within

intended uses, to local 4-H clubs and groups. The 4-H Charter is a written agreement signifying a club's use of the 4-H club name and emblem and insuring they are providing a positive youth development experience for their youth. Every MN 4-H club is expected to complete and submit the *4-H Charter Application* (Toolkit 1) to the County Extension Office by November 1st . New clubs may form and Charter at anytime throughout the year.

## What Does it Mean to be Chartered?

- Your club has the privilege of identifying itself as a 4-H club or group by using the 4-H club name and emblem.
- You agree to provide a positive youth development environment that upholds the dignity and educational purposes of the 4-H program.
- Your club and/or its members will be able to be a voting member of the County 4-H Council or Federation (varies by county).
- Screened volunteers of the club are covered by the University of Minnesota Liability Insurance.
- Your club will have the privilege of using the 4-H name and the 4-H clover symbol.

- Your club will have the right to raise and collect funds in the name of 4-H with the approval of 4-H staff.

## How Do Clubs Become Chartered?

1. Applications will be distributed by the Regional Office to club leaders.
2. Leaders will meet with the club to make sure everyone understands the purpose and requirements for chartering.
3. Completed applications from existing clubs must be turned into the County Extension Office by November 1<sup>st</sup> to be recognized as a 4-H club for the current program year. However, new clubs can be formed and chartered at anytime throughout the year.
  - If forms are not received by the due date, a staff member from the local office will contact the club leader.
4. Club leaders will be notified upon approval of the application.

### Forms that must Accompany the 4-H Charter Application:

- *Annual 4-H Group Financial Report* (found in the treasurer's handbook and Toolkit 1b)
- Signed Equal Opportunity Statement (Toolkit 1a)
- Program Planning Guide for upcoming year (Toolkit 1c)

## 4-H Club Constitution and By-Laws

Each 4-H club is encouraged to develop a constitution and bylaws. This document reflects the organizational makeup of the 4-H club. It describes when and where the club meets, what officers the club elects, etc. The entire 4-H club is responsible for writing and approving the constitution and bylaws. It is important that members, parents and volunteer leaders have input in how the club operates.

After completing the constitution and bylaws, forward a copy to the local Extension Office.

The constitution and bylaws should be reviewed on a regular basis.

Refer to *Sample 4-H Club Constitution & Bylaws* (Toolkit 3).



# 4-H Club Meeting & Program Planning



## Planning: The Key to Success

Most 4-H leaders, members and their parents are busy people who are involved in a variety of family, school and community activities. 4-H has much to offer, but busy people must choose the opportunities that best fit their needs and schedules.

Planning a yearly calendar (Toolkit 1c) will help everyone integrate 4-H activities with the rest of their personal commitments. An online word document is available through the 4-H website.

Adults and youth should work together to develop the yearly plan. The older the youth, the greater role they should play in this process.

For new clubs, some advance planning will need to be done by the adults to determine resources available and to narrow the options for youth to consider. This generally takes place at the initial organizational meeting of a new club. Refer to *Starting New 4-H Club Guide*, available in new 4-H Club Starter Kit or from your Regional Extension Office, for details.

A 4-H club needs to decide:

- How often to meet.
- When and where to meet, how formal or informal they want to be in carrying out club business.

- What they want to do at their club meetings.
- Estimate the money needed to run the club.

As a club, think about why members are involved. Plan your club program to meet the needs of the youth.

An effective planning process will create a well-balanced program and provide 4-H members with opportunities for personal development. Each member should be encouraged to voice his/her interests, goals and opinions. A well-planned program will:

- Provide opportunities for each person to assume responsibility.
- Include a variety of activities.
- Identify the preparation needed for meetings and events.
- Provide for timely communications.
- Avoid calendar conflicts.

While the planning method must be suitable to the characteristics of the club, an effective planning process will:

- Give each person a part in the decision.
- Facilitate both cooperation and compromise.
- Provide practice planning skills for members of all ages.

## When and How Do We Plan?

Most clubs plan their programs and elect officers in September or October. Clubs that operate only part of the year need to plan as soon as possible.

## What Are Goals?

Goals are simply statements of what you want to accomplish—what you want to do, what you want to learn. A goal is like a road map; it helps you decide how to get to where you want to go (Toolkit 4). Goals have three parts that allow us to measure and check our progress. They are:

1. Action—How?
2. Result—What?
3. Timetable—When?

While members will also have individual goals, club goals should reflect what is important to the group as a whole. These goals provide the foundation for the rest of the club plan. Club goals should:

- Be realistic.
- Meet the needs and interests of the club members.
- Promote cooperation.
- Provide individual achievement opportunities.
- Provide community and service participation.

## What Will You Do to Meet These Goals?

Once the goals are agreed upon, it is important to survey all club members on how the goals are going to be met. Examples of acceptable methods of surveying include:

- Using a suggestion box.
- Writing ideas on large pieces of paper taped on the walls.

- Collages.
- Roll Call (give ideas when name is called).
- Brainstorming.

When everyone's ideas have been presented and the group is ready to discuss them, it is helpful to have these items handy:

- School calendars.
- County 4-H calendar.
- 4-H project lists.
- Information about service-learning.
- Information about field trip opportunities.
- Information about community celebrations, festivals and events.

Everyone should be allowed to ask questions and voice his or her opinion about the plan. Conflicts in schedules and other concerns can be addressed at this time. After the plan has been discussed and revised as needed, members should vote to approve and adopt it as their yearly 4-H program.

Prior to adopting a plan, all participants should be able to say "yes" to the following questions:

- Does the program involve all members?
- Is the program interesting to all ages?
- Is the plan realistic?
- Does the plan include activities for learning and service and just for fun?
- Did you consider county 4-H events?
- Is someone responsible for each task?

## How Do We Ensure that the Plan is Successful?

Through communications and check-ups!

- Provide each family with a program book with detailed information on club meetings, dates, times, locations, and agenda items.
- Call club members to encourage their involvement.
- Club newsletters.

## What If the Plan Isn't Working?

As the year progresses, changes may be necessary. You may spot lagging interest, more pressing needs or opportunities. The club should review the progress, and if necessary, amend the club plan.

## How Should 4-H Club Meetings Look?

Your imagination is the limit! Club gatherings can look however you would like. They can change in format. As a club, think about why members are involved and stay involved. What are they looking for? Then plan your club gatherings to meet those needs.

Focus on parts that meet the club's needs for each meeting. Some meetings may focus entirely on project work to help members accomplish their goals and learn new skills.

Remember 4-H should be fun! Celebrate accomplishments or just take time to focus on recreation once in awhile. It's a great way to build a club team. Field trips and service-learning, etc. can put spice into your club, providing opportunities for youth to plan and organize while having fun. Contact your local 4-H Program for resources. Whether your meetings are formal or

informal, the agenda needs to be well planned in advance. The *4-H Club Meeting Outline* can be used as a resource (Toolkit 5).

Hold business meetings when they are needed (and keep them short and to the point to prevent boredom). The business portion should last no more than 15-20 minutes and could include:

1. Call to order
2. Flag pledges
3. Roll call/attendance
4. Reading of the minutes
5. Treasurer's report
6. Committees reports
7. Unfinished business
8. New business
9. Announcements
10. Adjournment

If your club has no business to discuss at a particular meeting, your agenda might be as simple as:

1. Call to order
2. Flag pledges
3. Roll call/attendance
4. Announcements
5. Adjournment

Refer to Toolkit 6 or samples of six club meetings that can be adapted to your club needs.



# Tips for Conducting Club Meetings



## Structure Meetings Appropriately

The way club meetings are structured depends largely on the size of the group and the age of the members. Remember to keep the meeting interesting and to change the pace of the meeting every 15 minutes or so. The average attention span for youth ranges from 10 to 20 minutes. In general, 4-H meetings are divided into four parts:

1. **Pre-Meeting:** bridges the gap between the time members begin to arrive and the time the actual meeting begins. Activities for the pre-meeting time can include mixers, word games, puzzles, etc.
2. **Business Meeting:** members learn how to conduct a meeting and practice democratic decision-making.
3. **Educational Program:** usually project work, but may involve special presentations or activities conducted by resource people, parents or older members.
4. **Recreation/Refreshment/Social Activities:** provides members an opportunity to develop and practice social skills.

The order of these segments and the amount of time devoted to each may be varied to suit the specific activities

planned, the time and place the meeting is held, etc. Here are some specific suggestions:

1. Clubs that meet right after school may want to have refreshments available as the members arrive. Quiet recreational activities such as two-person pencil and paper games can be used to keep order and foster interaction until the start of the meeting.
2. When members can't settle down and focus on the task at hand, a short, active game followed by a quiet one can release energy and get the group ready for more "serious business." For further tips on how to handle behavior situations, please see "Manage Group Activities for Safety, Efficiency, and Effective Learning". (page 29)
3. While Cloverbud groups do not conduct business meetings, starting each meeting with the same opening ritual establishes a structured routine that is important for this age group. Use of a closing ritual is also recommended. Members can be assigned "officers of the day" to help conduct these rituals.

4. The timing of meeting segments must relate to both the attention span of the age group and the nature of the activities planned.
5. Sharing club leadership with your members is important. It makes your job easier and it develops life skills for the members.
6. Beyond the four segments there are many little things you can do to make your 4-H club meeting fun and educational. Contact your local 4-H staff for ideas.

### **Roles of Officers**

Clubs may elect youth to fill leadership positions to help run club meetings. While club offices should reflect the needs of the club, following are some of the most common.

**President:** Presides at all meetings. Appoints committees as needed.

**Vice President:** Serves in the absence of the President. May serve as program chair for meetings.

**Secretary:** Keeps complete and accurate minutes of all meetings. Handles correspondence. Keeps the 4-H Secretary's Book up-to-date.

**Treasurer:** Takes care of all group funds. Collects dues when required by the club. Keeps the 4-H Treasurer's Book up-to-date.

**Reporter:** Writes interesting reports of meetings and special club events for the local newspaper.

**Historian:** Collects newspaper clippings, programs and pictures of the club's activities and events and puts them into a club scrapbook.

Other roles youth may play in the club include: flag leader, caller, greeter, game leader, song leader, paper passer, parliamentarian, and photographer.

For additional help on Parliamentary Procedure refer to Toolkit 7.

### **Engaging Youth in Conversations to Make Decisions**

Effective youth groups make a conscious effort to involve all members in discussions. Following are some techniques to get youth talking.

1. President asks specific questions, such as:
  - Roger, what do you think of...
  - Anne, from your experience at the county fair, would you share your feelings...
  - Does anyone know of situations where this has worked?
  - What has been your thinking on this point?
2. Use special group decision-making processes:
  - **BUZZ GROUP**—When member ideas are needed to solve a problem, divide into small groups and have each group report their best ideas back in a short time.
  - **BRAINSTORMING**—Generate and list as many different ideas as possible in five minutes. Respect and value all ideas. In the first round of voting, everyone votes for as many ideas as they choose. In the next round, everyone votes only for his/her top two choices. Use markers, stickers, or colored dots for voting. Ideas receiving the most votes become the group's decision.
  - **NOMINAL GROUP PROCESS**—Sit in a circle. Ideas are shared in a "round robin" order until all ideas

are recorded. If a person does not have an idea, he/she may pass. If an idea has been listed already, it can't be repeated. Go around the circle until there are no more ideas. Do not discuss the list. Everyone privately ranks his/her choices (1=first choice, 2=second; and so on) on a 3"x5" card. The choices are tallied and shared.

*Acknowledgements: Starting a New 4-H Club, Janet Beyer, University of Minnesota Extension; My Leadership Journal, National 4-H Cooperative Curriculum Systems, Inc.*

## **Committees**

Referring a task to a committee is one of the best techniques for avoiding long business meetings. Frequently, when an idea is brought to the club, it's not possible to discuss it thoroughly and vote without taking a great deal of valuable meeting time. When possible, the President should refer the matter to the appropriate committee.

The advantages are many for groups using committees. Not everyone wants to hold an office, but everyone can serve on a committee. Youth chairpersons can learn valuable leadership skills. More ideas emerge from group interaction. Those involved in making a decision are committed to the ideas.

Each club will need to determine the committees to carry out their club's goals. Some committees may be set up at the beginning of the club year, while others will be created as new ideas come forward. Create committees to carry out big club tasks like managing community service project or club fundraiser, developing the club's recognition program, designing the club's fair banner, or planning a club tour.

The purpose of the committee should be the primary consideration in determining how large the group should be. Keep in mind that the major reason for appointing a committee in the first place, is the advantage of greater efficiency and flexibility of a small group over a large one. It's recommended that committees have a variety of members, both ages and ideas. Adult volunteers may serve an advisory role on a committee.

Each committee should have a written purpose, specific duties and responsibilities, and date for completing work. Discussion items and recommendations should be reported back to the entire group by a pre-determined date. Refer to *4-H Club Committee Planning Sheet* (Toolkit 8)

*Acknowledgements: Working with Committees, Judy M. Groff, Extension 4-H Specialist, North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service; Advisor's Handbook, Ohio 4-H; 4-H Volunteer Training Unit 2, Maryland 4-H; Working with Committees, University of Illinois Extension*

## **Use Ceremonies to Build Cohesiveness Among 4-H Members**

Participation in ceremonies produces a sense of kinship among the members of an organization (i.e., we believe in the same things and we're in this together). Depending on their nature, ceremonies may also foster teamwork, reinforce expectations, proclaim an organization's values to the general public or provide recognition to members. For ceremonies commonly used by clubs see *4-H New Member Initiation Ceremony* (Toolkit 9) and *4-H Club Officer Installation Ceremony* (Toolkit 9).

## Evaluate Meetings Regularly and Take Action When Problems Arise

After the group has been meeting for four to six months, take a close look at how things are going.

The *Essential Elements Planning Tool* (available on-line at <http://4htools.cals.arizona.edu/assessmentTool.cfm>) should be used with club leaders, members and parents mid-way through the club year (February/March) to gain their perspective on club meetings and experiences, inform plans for improvement, and/or reinforce what the club is currently doing.

This tool must be completed again at the end of the 4-H club year (September) and results submitted to the Regional Extension Office, along with the application for Charter renewal. Even though every effort has been made to keep things running smoothly, problems will occasionally arise. When they do, it is important to address them as soon as possible, before they get out of hand.

The key to effective problem solving is identifying the cause. If you don't know why the problem exists you are likely to be merely "treating the symptom" rather than "curing the disease." Toolkit 10, *Troubleshooting 4-H Problems*, describes some common 4-H club problems, lists some possible causes and suggests alternative solutions.

## Involve the Parents

Everyone benefits when parents are involved in the 4-H club program:

- **4-H members** need their parents' support and encouragement to attend meetings, complete projects and fulfill responsibilities to the club.
- **Parents** have an opportunity to spend time with their children and

enjoy activities together. In many ways, 4-H is a "partner in parenting."

- **4-H leaders** have a lot to juggle. Being able to delegate some of those responsibilities, even the smallest ones, can be a big help.
- **The community** benefits when families support community-minded organizations like 4-H. Involved families are more knowledgeable about community issues and therefore more likely to support community efforts as well.

Keep these benefits in mind when you invite parents to become involved. Here are some suggestions on how, when and whom you ask. Additional ideas can be found in *Parents Can Help in Our 4-H Club* (Toolkit 11).

- **Meet with parents at the beginning of each year.** This parent meeting may take place before, after or as part of the club's planning meeting. While members should make the final decision about their projects and activities, it is important to know early in the year the ways in which parents can support the club program. Consider using the interest survey and/or activity sign-up sheet to encourage commitment and to keep track of everyone's interests and availability (Toolkit 12).
- **Maintain good communication.** In order for parents to feel like a part of the group and that they share responsibility for its success, they must be kept informed about the "when, where and whys" of both the club's activities and the 4-H club program in general.

Some ways you can stay connected with parents are:

- \* Ask parents to assist at club meetings on a rotating basis. You may even want to meet in the members' homes on a rotating basis.
- \* Encourage members to ask their parents for help when working on projects at home.
- \* Send information sheets home with members prior to special activities such as project trainings.
- \* Make time to chat with parents whenever they bring their child to an activity.
- **Create opportunities to get to know parents better.** For example, hold "parent nights" or "family days" during which members can "show-off" their accomplishments and parents can socialize with one another. Learn about their personal interests, hobbies and family activities. Later, requests for help can then be based on the things you know they enjoy and can do well.
- **When you need help:**
  - \* Ask an individual, basing your request on that person's interests, skills and abilities. Generic calls for help don't work!
  - \* Be honest and specific about the commitment and time frame.
  - \* Ask well in advance of when the job needs to be done.
- **Express your appreciation appropriately.** Regardless of how much or how little a parent has done, she/he deserves a "thank you." Whether it is delivered in the form of a phone call, a handwritten note or public recognition, that may include a certificate or

small gift, will depend on what was done and the person's personality— one size does not fit all!

## Involve Youth Leaders

Youth Leaders are 4-H teens who partner with adults to provide leadership for 4-H clubs and countywide 4-H activities. Depending on his or her age and experience, a youth leader can serve as general assistant, teach a project, mentor individual members, coordinate activities or assume almost any other 4-H leadership role under supervision of an adult.

Involving youth leaders in your club not only "lightens the load" for you, it also adds sparks of energy and enthusiasm, provides role models for your members and provides teens with valuable opportunity to practice their leadership skills. Refer to *Roles for Youth Leaders* (Toolkit 13) for ideas on how to get youth involved in clubs.

## Communication: An Important Two-Way Street

You will be receiving both regularly scheduled communications (such as a 4-H newsletter) and special mailings from the County and/or Regional Extension Office. Often they will contain registration instructions for up-coming events. Occasionally, they will request information needed by 4-H staff for reporting purposes.

The information you provide is important and submitting it on time, eliminates the need for duplicate mailings or phone calls that needlessly waste time and money.

Given the busy world we live in, it is very tempting to let our paperwork pile up until we have some "down time." (Does it ever come?) In the end, it is usually a lot

easier to take it one paper at a time. So please reply to 4-H mailings as soon after they arrive as possible. The following suggestions will also help to facilitate communication:

- **Note deadlines.** When you find a form in a 4-H mailing, immediately look for the deadline date and mark a day **at least two business days earlier on your calendar.** If you will need to gather information from members or parents and you will be having a club meeting before the deadline, it may be easiest to put the paperwork on the meeting agenda. If not, decide right away when and how you will collect the information you need.
- **Please call us.** If you are not sure you understand a question on a form or exactly how the information should be recorded, call **the person who sent you the form.** This is not being “pesky,” it is being helpful. Chances are that you are not the only person who is perplexed. Your call alerts the sender that there is a communication problem and provides an opportunity to clear it up for everyone.
- **Be aware of the schedule.** Certain information will be requested from you at the same time every year, and 4-H events that require registration also take place at about the same time each year. Anticipating the arrival of these mailings will help you to gather the needed information in advance.

- **Look for the expected mailing.** Checking up on the whereabouts of a mailing you were expecting to receive but did not, may help you avoid missing an opportunity. Things really do “get lost in the mail” sometimes. The two busiest times for paperwork are the beginning of the school year and prior to fair. Be on the look out!



# Understanding Ages of Youth



4-H Clubs are made up of a mixture of ages of youth and adults. It is a strength of 4-H, but also a challenge. Today's communities have very few places where ages are not separated into individual groups. That makes 4-H unique. It is important to know what to expect of the different ages of youth. By doing so, you will better understand what behavior to expect and what needs the youth have.

## Gen Y (Millennials, Echo Boomers, Nexters)

These are all terms for the upcoming generation, born between 1981-2003. There are 1.1 million in this group in Minnesota; the group is three times larger than Gen X'ers. Half of this age group are not yet adolescents. They come from radically, culturally diverse backgrounds:

- 1 in 3 are non-white;
- 1 in 4 live in single parent households; and
- 3 in 4 have working moms.

The Gen Y's have a good relationship with their parents. They are very tech savvy. The group has a practical view of the world. When planning activities and events, remember the ages and stages. In addition, remember the upcoming Gen Y group and their characteristics.

## Cloverbuds

These members, K-2nd graders, are very curious. A child in this stage is more interested in the process than in the resulting product; the child is more inclined to con-

tinue working on a project than to complete it. Thinking is concrete at this age. If these members have never seen it, heard it, felt it, tasted it, or smelled it, they have a hard time thinking about it. They also enjoy activities and materials that are real and tangible. Rather than simply giving instructions verbally, you should demonstrate the activity. The opinion of peers is becoming important. Children at this age like to play games, but hate to lose. Try to establish some measure of success in every experience to ease blows to young egos.

## Young Children (grades K-3)

### Physical Development

- In a period of slow physical growth.
- Learning to master physical skills.
- Lack muscular coordination skills.

### Emotional Development

- Are egocentric/self-centered (4-H should provide experiences which require sharing/cooperation to help children move beyond self-centeredness).
- Need and seek approval from adults (by the end of this stage begin to compare themselves with others, like to play games, but can't accept losing).
- Intellectual development.
- More interested in doing things than in the end product. (Need practice focusing on one thing at a time to move to the next stage.)

### Social Development

- Learning to be friends with others.
- Younger kids enjoy playing together, but by the end of the stage, boys and girls will separate.
- Fighting occurs, but does not have lasting effects.

### **School Age Children (grades 4-8)**

#### Physical Development

- Very active and enjoy things which involve movement, cannot sit still for long periods of time.
- Beginning of adolescent is marked by a growth spurt which occurs across a wide range of ages, with females maturing before males. (Rapid physical changes are often a source of embarrassment for young teens.)

#### Emotional Development

- Have a weak sense of individual identity. (Need to feel accepted and worthwhile, successes should be emphasized and failures kept in perspective as learning opportunities.)
- By the end of the period, begin to demonstrate Kohlberg's post-conventional moral thinking.
- During puberty, changes in hormones and changes in thinking contribute to mood swings.
- Begin to test value. (Justice and equality become regarded as important issues.)
- Feel the need to be part of something important.

#### Intellectual Development

- Until around age 10 or 11, think concretely in absolutes (black/white, right/wrong), but are beginning to think logically (new ideas are best understood if related to previous experiences.)
- Around age 10 or 11, begin to demonstrate formal, operational thinking and think abstractly, but still tend to think in all-or-nothing terms.

- Will intensely explore subjects of interest.
- Often reject solutions offered by adults in favor of finding their own solutions.

### Social Development

- Joining clubs and groups becomes very important around age 9-10. (Will form clubs with a group of others similar to themselves.)
- Have difficulty understanding others' thinking, but understand the benefit of making others happy.
- Satisfaction in completing projects comes more from pleasing adults in their lives, than from the value of the activity itself.
- By the end of this period:
  - Ready to start being responsible for actions;
  - Move away from dependence on parents toward eventual independence;
  - Dependence on opinions of adults shifts to dependence on opinions of peers, enjoy doing activities away from home.

### **High School Age Youth**

#### Physical Development

- Physical changes are accepted by most teens, and most awkwardness is past, although some boys are still growing quickly.
- Most females reach maximum height by age 14, most males by age 16, males gain muscle, females gain fat. Both sexes are still developing bone mass.

#### Emotional Development

- Searching for independence and identity, usually achieved around age 16.
- Seeking emotional autonomy from parents.

- Younger teens have difficulty with compromise.
- Unsettled emotions are common.
- Take pride in responsibility and respect of others.

#### Intellectual Development

- Continue to gain cognitive and study skills, can adapt language to different contexts.
- Mastering abstract thinking.
- Exploring and preparing for future careers and roles.
- Set goals based on feelings of personal needs and priorities, likely to reject goals set by others.

#### Social Development

- Generally self-centered, but capable of empathy.
- Relationship skills are well developed.
- Dating increases and moves from group dates to double dates to couple only dating and intimacy.
- Accepted by opposite sex is of high importance.
- Want to belong to groups, but be recognized as unique individuals within the groups.
- Employment and education fill the need for social relationships, which were earlier filled by club and group activities.

*Acknowledgements: Kathryn J. Cox Extension 4-H Specialist, Youth Development. Ohio State University.*



# Manage Group Activities for Safety, Efficiency, and Effective Learning



Detailed information about the purpose of 4-H projects and use of experiential learning methods can be found in the *projects* selection of this Guide. This section covers the practical matters of handling behavior.

## What is Normal, Acceptable Behavior? (Belonging)

This depends on the children's ages and the situation. What is okay for nine-year-olds at a recreation activity, is probably not appropriate for teenagers on an educational tour. The fine line between acceptable and unacceptable behavior is crossed when any of the following occur:

- Anyone is in danger of physical or mental harm.
- The behavior is disruptive to the activity of the group.
- The rights of others (in the group or bystanders) are infringed upon.

How can you detect unacceptable behavior?

- When you notice that any of the above three items have occurred or are likely to occur.
- When you observe negative reactions from other children.
- When you, as an adult, are not comfortable with the behavior. (Make sure your views are not so strict or lenient that they do not allow for mainstream interests and actions of children. If in doubt, ask other parents.)

## Setting Boundaries (Belonging)

Working with youth, especially other people's children, can be a challenge. While some children are better behaved than others, they all need acceptance and the opportunity to learn. In mixed groups, the challenge of a youth leader is to see that disruptive youth do not impede learning or fun for others. Their very presence in the group, combined with your wise guidance, will help them learn how to be respectful, positive members of a learning community.

## Clear Expectations (Belonging)

Uncertainty and confusion add stress to individuals and groups and can lead to acting-out behavior. When norms of group behavior are simple and clear, then members generally respond well. Too many rules, constantly changing expectations, or unclear consequences often set the stage for negative behavior.

## Levels of Consequence (Belonging)

Begin with the least restrictive response. Hopefully the problem will be solved before many levels of response are needed. At each level of consequence, seek to engage the youth in positive choices by reinforcing positive behavior.

The first level of confronting negative behavior can be a simple word of correction, spoken privately to the individual in

need of correction. The private and respectful presentation of the correction will avoid embarrassing or belittling the individual in front of the group. One approach might be, "Here is the problem, what can we do about it?"

A second level of consequence might be a "time-out" or separation from the group's activity. A time-out gives the individual an opportunity to feel the consequences of negative behavior and consider future actions. The approach might be, "Sit here for five minutes and then let me know how you intend to participate when you return to the group."

A third level of consequence can be isolation from the group, such as going to another (supervised) location for a significant time. The group will be able to continue and the individual will experience the severity of the problem behavior. This intervention should include a discussion with the leader of the program regarding the need to make different choices if the child wishes to continue in the program. Return to the next group session would require readiness to commit to the group's norms.

Finally, the fourth level of response may be removing the member from the group permanently or at least until a new beginning is possible.

### **Motivate Members Through Positive Reinforcement (Mastery)**

Positive reinforcement is the single most effective tool for motivating youth. It is also very important in discipline.

Youth need constant reinforcement for their positive activities. But providing positive reinforcement is not easy. It requires a positive outlook on your part and

must be practiced. It comes in two forms: verbal and nonverbal.

When giving positive reinforcement it is important to be specific and sincere. Don't say, "John, you've done a good job." Say specifically what the child did: "John, your carrot cake looks good and tastes great—good job!" Being too general with positive comments may appear artificial or phony.

Unfortunately, most people find it easier to be critical than positive. To overcome this, focus on the strengths and successes (even small ones) of your members. Help them to accept themselves so that they can accept others. Following your lead, they will also learn to give positive feedback to others.

Give positive reinforcement constantly. Here are some simple ways to do it:

- A smile.
- A nod.
- An enthusiastic and encouraging comment.
- Saying "thank you".
- Asking a member to demonstrate skills to the rest of the group.

There are literally thousands of ways to show positive reinforcement. As you see the results of your words and actions, the importance of positive reinforcement will be quite clear and you will find your own ways to provide it both verbally and non-verbally. In the meantime, you can find some more suggestions in *Ways to Say "Good for You."* (Toolkit 14)

### **Work as a Team (Mastery)**

Group members will commit to group goals and expectations when they have had a part in setting those targets. Members who have chosen the expectations together, will be more likely to work coop-

## **Attention to Youth Development (Independence)**

The goal of effective behavior management is to assist young people in making positive decisions about their own behavior and actions. The goal is not simply compliance but joyful participation. Effective behavior management begins by creating a safe, secure, and comfortable setting for the group's activities. When needs for security, belonging, and recognition are being met, acting out and misbehavior will less likely occur.

## **A Well-Planned Program (Independence)**

Effective behavior management is rooted in good program organization and strong leadership. Well prepared, relevant, and exciting programs will capture the imaginations and energy of the participants and will deter disruptive and negative behavior patterns.

Children thrive on new experiences and successful goal achievement. When they are actively engaged, they do not succumb to the boredom or discouragement that leads to negative behavior.

## **Prevention is Better Than the Cure (Generosity)**

Understanding the motivations of youth is important to understanding their behaviors. Through your actions, you can help youth be motivated. You can help motivate in the following ways:

- Use a variety of teaching methods. This helps keep both the teachers and the learners from becoming bored. Boredom is a major enemy of motivation, and often leads to unacceptable behavior as children battle the boredom.
- Involve as many youth as possible in planning and doing. This gives them ownership in the group and therefore, a feeling of belonging. Also, kids will usually be more interested in something *they* say they want to do, as opposed to something that *someone else* thinks they want to do.
- Try giving a disruptive member a special job to help you or the club. Often, disruptive behavior is a plea for attention. Help the member channel that energy and need in a positive direction.
- Focus on *doing* more and watch kids want to try things themselves. Remember the "Learn by Doing" philosophy of 4-H.





# Money Matters

## Basic Principles: Financial Policies and Practices

The principles governing Financial Policies and Practices are based on the philosophy that learning happens when youth are engaged; that there is benefit in quality relationships; and that developing life skills is essential for youth to reach their potential. These beliefs support the 4-H mission and the Essential Elements of Youth Development (BU-6715-S).

- **Youth Learn.** Managing financial resources provides opportunities for youth to develop life skills (e.g., record keeping, budgeting, etc.); therefore youth, as valuable partners, must be involved in meaningful financial roles.
- **Public Organization.** Because 4-H is a public organization, monies received from dues, fundraising, and other sources are owned by 4-H to be used for the benefit of all members and not owned by any one member, leader or person.
- **Educational Purpose.** Fundraising programs using the 4-H name or emblem may be carried out for educational purposes. Such fundraising programs, and the use of the 4-H name and emblem on or associated with products and services for such purposes, must have the approval of

the appropriate Extension Office. (*The 4-H Name and Emblem: Guidelines for Authorized Use, USDA*)

- **Review Activities.** The Extension Educator responsible for the county 4-H program must review each 4-H organization's activities to determine that it continues to meet the particular 4-H objectives for which it was established and that the 4-H Name and Emblem are used in accordance with the statute. (*Tax Exempt Status of 4-H Organizations Authorized to Use the 4-H Name and Emblem, USDA*)
- **Accountability.** Every 4-H club shall maintain a record of its activities and of contributions received, prepare and keep on file a record of its financial transactions, file all necessary state and federal forms, and submit an annual report to the Extension Educator responsible for the county/state 4-H program. (*Tax Exempt Status of 4-H Organizations Authorized to Use the 4-H Name and Emblem, USDA*)

These policies and practices need to be followed to maintain the integrity of 4-H and all those involved in the program and to ensure that 4-H programs meet the needs of youth.

## Summary of Ten Major MN 4-H Financial Policies

1. As a public organization, 4-H is open to any youth within the eligibility parameters. (Center for Youth Development Homepage at <http://www.fourh.umn.edu/>)
2. As a public organization, we are accountable for our funds.
3. All groups using the 4-H name and emblem must follow federal and state policies and rules.
4. All fundraising activities should be reviewed and approved by the appropriate 4-H Extension Educator **before** the event.
5. All money raised using the 4-H name must be used only for 4-H activities, education and character building.
6. Funds must not be used for personal financial gain for any individual. Pocket money, personal items and souvenirs are clearly not legitimate uses of money raised in the name of 4-H.
7. All 4-H groups should establish a checking account at a public financial institution. All checks require two authorized signatures.
8. Upon dissolution, all 4-H group assets and financial records must be turned over to the County or Regional Extension Office. Funds will be turned over for deposit to the County 4-H Federation or Council to be used for 4-H Youth Development programs.

9. A 4-H group that collects or distributes money, must have an annual review/audit.
10. All 4-H clubs, groups, or organizations using the 4-H name are required to submit an *Annual 4-H Group Budget and Financial Report* to the County or Regional Extension Office.

### Public Ownership

4-H is chartered by the U.S. Congress as a federal program that comes out of the United States Department of Agriculture (U.S.D.A.), but it encompasses more than agriculture. In every state, the 4-H program is directed at the land grant college of that state. In MN, our land grant college is the University of Minnesota. MN 4-H is a unique partnership of the federal government, the state through the land grant university, and each of the 87 counties.

At the county level, the 4-H Program Coordinators/Directors work with volunteers and parents to provide a youth-led organization that centers on education, character building and the development of life skills. This is done in a wide variety of ways in 4-H ranging from Community Clubs to school-based and community-based programs. Volunteer leaders play a very special role in supporting and encouraging project work, activities, leadership and educational opportunities for youth.

Ownership of 4-H takes place on many different levels. Often there is a very close personal sense of ownership by families (many involved for several generations); but, unlike many other youth-serving organizations, 4-H is not a private, non-public organization. Because 4-H is a public organization—federal, state and

county—it is not "owned" by individuals or a small group. Instead, 4-H is owned by the public. Therefore, the treasurer of a 4-H club, federation, project committee, auction committee, project development committee, or other groups (from here on after referred to as "4-H group") is responsible not only to the other officers, but also to the other members, the adult leaders and the public.

As a public organization, 4-H is open to any youth within the eligibility parameter. We are accountable for our funds. Dealing with finances in 4-H is first and foremost an educational experience for the youth. The role of the club adult leader/volunteer is to support and help the youth treasurer.

### **Private and Public Funds**

Leaders are in charge of helping the treasurer "keep the books." This includes the 4-H group's receipt book, checkbook and check register, payment vouchers and bank statements. The public calls for a higher standard of accountability and integrity for public groups. You can meet the high standards required of 4-H by studying and following the money handling methods found in this handbook and *The MN 4-H Club Treasurer's Book*. These standards apply whether a group's treasury has \$5 or \$500.

Conflicts may arise if money is not handled carefully and accurately. You can protect the treasurer and your 4-H group from conflict by:

- Encouraging the careful, responsible and accurate handling of finances.
- Using proper parliamentary procedure in making decisions involving the use of funds.
- Supporting and advising the 4-H group treasurer in their role.
- Being informed on financial policies, guidelines, and issues that govern the 4-H program.

### **Name and Emblem**

When you raise money in the name of 4-H, you are responsible for protecting the good name of 4-H. You are responsible for this both in how the money is raised and how it is used. The very name and emblem of 4-H is a copyrighted trademark. In the legal sense, the U.S.D.A. owns the emblem. As with any trademark, there are rules and laws about how and where it can be used. Therefore, you should talk with your Program Coordinator/Director about appropriate fundraising efforts.

All groups using the 4-H name and emblem must follow federal and state policies and rules. These include, but are not limited to, 4-H clubs, county 4-H councils and advisory boards, 4-H teen or youth leader clubs, 4-H project clubs.

### **Financial Guidelines**

#### **Checking Accounts**

- All 4-H group financial transactions should take place by check rather than cash to ensure accountability. See Financial Transaction Form (Toolkit 15)
- To help maintain accountability, duplicate check systems are strongly recommended.
- All 4-H clubs/groups should establish a checking account at a public financial institution. The 4-H group leader, with the treasurer, should establish this account. Do not use a personal social security number in opening a 4-H group checking or savings account because of tax liability concerns. In order to open any 4-H account, the group must obtain an EIN number.
- Each 4-H group must require at least the youth treasurer and two adult leaders' names to be signers

on the signatory card at the bank, unless the bank will not allow a youth as a signer. Neither adult leader may be the treasurer's parent or guardian. Note: If the bank does not allow a youth to sign on the account, the club/group must make sure that a young person is still elected as treasurer and carries out all other duties of the office.

- The checking account should be set up so that all checks require two signatures, youth treasurer and adult leader.
- Authorized signatures will need to be updated at the financial institution each time a new treasurer is elected or when leadership changes in the group.
- Read only rights on 4-H accounts are to be given to 4-H Extension Educator and Program Coordinator/Director. No 4-H staff member may sign on any account belonging to a 4-H club/group/federation.
- The treasurer should deposit funds promptly. Endorse checks immediately upon receipt.
- All money received must be acknowledged with a pre-numbered written receipt. This receipt must include the source of the funds, the date, and if possible, the name of the person making the payments. These receipts are the back-up documentation for any bank deposits. The receipts must also become a permanent part of the group records.
- Payment must be made only in response to a formal written bill or invoice. The itemized invoice, clearly

stating what was billed, with the check number and date of the check on it, will become a permanent part of the treasurer's records. See *Financial Transaction Request* (Toolkit 16).

- If a check is written on the group's account is lost, notify the customer service department of the bank at once to stop payment of the check. There will be a stop payment charge.

### **Additional Responsibilities of the Treasurer Position**

- Reconcile the bank statement each month. A youth treasurer may need assistance with this process. See *4-H Group Treasurer Bank Statement Reconciliation* (Toolkit 17).
- Present a report at each meeting of income and expenses and ending balance that will be noted in the minutes of that meeting. See *Treasurers Report at a Club/Group Meeting* (Toolkit 18).
- Report any suspected theft or misuse of funds to the 4-H Program Coordinator/Program Director and the 4-H Extension Educator.

### **Budget**

It is essential that all 4-H groups effectively manage public funds raised as part of their activities. All 4-H groups must complete and file a copy of the "*4-H Group Budget and Financial Form*" (Toolkit 19) report if they handle any money during the year.

Public reporting shows good fiscal management and stewardship of all funds raised or expended in the name of 4-H.

The form is completed twice during the year. The first time is at the beginning of the 4-H year (October 1) showing the proposed budget for the current year. The second time is at the end of the 4-H year (September 30) showing all actual income and expenditures for the current year. The proposed budget is for the next 4-H year.

The original form should be sent to the regional office as part of the 4-H Charter Application. One copy should be kept in the treasurer's book.

4-H Federation/Leader's Council may choose to attach their own budget form as long as it includes past year proposed, past year actual and the new year proposed budget amounts. All other information on the "Annual 4-H Group Financial Report" form must be completed and turned in along with the group's own budget form.

Also, the *Bring it Back* (Toolkit 20) form helps 4-Hers have some accountability when they have been given money to attend an event.

### **Fundraising Guidelines**

Your 4-H group should observe the following guidelines when planning or conducting a fundraiser: (See Toolkit 21).

Receive advance approval from your Program Coordinator/Director for each fundraiser that you plan (see sample *Fundraiser Approval Form* in Toolkit 22). Refer to rules about the use of the 4-H name and emblem in fundraising.

Use the 4-H name or emblem only on products your group has made or produced. If working with a fundraising company or busi-

nesses, be sure that they have approval to use the 4-H name and emblem.

All money raised using the 4-H name must be used only for 4-H activities. (Contact your local Extension Office for *Guidelines for Authorized Use of the 4-H Name and Emblem*, the *Tax-Exempt Status of 4-H Organizations Authorized to Use the 4-H Name, and Emblem* booklets.)

Check with local and state authorities on health, licensing, labeling, labor and tax laws. If you need help, check with your Program Coordinator/Director.

4-H groups planning to conduct raffles must comply with state regulations and obtain licenses. Contact the Minnesota Gambling Control Board for specific guidelines at (651) 639-4000, 1711 W. Co. Rd. B, Roseville, MN 55113. There are different types and lengths of licenses.

If you have questions, ask your 4-H Program Coordinator/Direction for more information.

### **Federal Tax Facts**

4-H is a tax-exempt organization under an IRS ruling letter of February 9, 1993. It recognizes the tax exemption status of 4-H clubs and affiliated 4-H organizations that are organized and operated under the guidance and control of the Cooperative Extension Service.

### **Federal Tax Exempt Status**

4-H organizations are exempt from Federal income taxes as indicated in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954.

Tax exempt status is contingent on meeting the requirements of Affirmative Action

Guidelines. These insure that potential clientele have equal opportunity in education, programming, and employment for all qualified persons regardless of race, color, gender/sex, creed, disability, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital, parental or veteran status, or non-related conviction record.

**4-H Group Federal Tax-Exempt Number (GEN).** Occasionally you may be asked for your federal tax-exempt number. All 4-H groups nationwide qualify to use the 4-H group exemption number (GEN2704).

*Filing Federal Form 990.* Tax exempt status does not exempt a 4-H organization from filing Form 990 if its gross receipts are over \$25,000 during the tax year. When H organizations file Form 990, they should use the 4-H group exemption number.

If the organization's gross receipts during the year are less than \$100,000 and its total assets at the end of the year are less than \$250,000 it may file Form 990-EZ, Short Form Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax, instead of Form 990. Instructions for filing Form 990 or Form 990EZ and the required Schedule are available from the IRS. ([http://www.irs.ustreas.gov/prod/forms\\_pubs/forms.html](http://www.irs.ustreas.gov/prod/forms_pubs/forms.html)).

Forms 990 or 990EZ must be filed by the fifteenth day of the fifth month after the organization's accounting period ends.

### **Individual Income Tax Deductions**

4-H leaders are eligible for income tax deductions. Generally, a 4-H leader can deduct:

- Cost of goods you donate to 4-H. (Any donation over \$250 requires a

letter from the Extension Office to verify the amount of the donation.)

- Transportation costs.
- Out-of-pocket costs for conferences and training.

IRS publications can be a helpful source of legal deductions for the current year. Leaders should keep a valid receipt/record of mileage. Date and nature of expenses need to be documented.

### **State Tax Facts**

#### **Minnesota Income Tax Exemption**

In Minnesota, a non-profit organization which is recognized by the IRS as exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) is NOT automatically exempt from Minnesota income tax. A non-profit organization that wants to be recognized by the Minnesota Department of Revenue as exempt from state income tax must apply for state income tax exemption by filing Form M-120 with the Minnesota Department of Revenue.

While there is no annual requirement to file the federal Form 990 with the Minnesota Department of Revenue, a tax-exempt organization may be required to file an income tax return, Form M-4NP, with the Minnesota Department of Revenue if the organization has any unrelated trade or business taxable income.

Copies of these forms are available through the Minnesota Department of Revenue.

#### **Minnesota Sales Tax Exemption Purchases**

For 4-H units to avoid paying Minnesota sales tax on purchases, the units must have obtained a Minnesota sales tax exemption certificate from the Minnesota De-

partment of Revenue. Application for sales tax exemption can be made by filing Form ST-16 with the Minnesota Department of Revenue.

## **Sales**

4-H units are required to collect Minnesota sales tax on the sales of tangible property and certain, limited services unless a specific exemption applies to the transaction. An exemption from collecting sales tax will apply for transactions that qualify as "occasional sales" under the definition of occasional sales provided by the Minnesota Department of Revenue. An exemption from collecting sales tax may also apply for sales in connection with certain fundraising events.

For assistance in applying these exemptions, contact the Minnesota Department of Revenue. When a 4-H unit engages in taxable sales activity, the unit must register with the Department of Revenue by filing Form ABR, Application for Business Registration.

The 4-H unit must collect Minnesota sales tax from customers at the time of sale. The 4-H unit must also file Form ST-1 on either a monthly, quarterly, or annual basis to report and remit sales tax collected on retail sales to the Department of Revenue. The 4-H unit should be aware that the Minnesota sales tax rate may vary depending upon the location of the sale. Additional guidance on Minnesota sales tax compliance is available from the Department of Revenue.

## **Minnesota Attorney General Oversight of Charities**

A 4-H unit recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) organization may also be required to register with the Minnesota Attorney General's office under either the Minnesota

Charitable Trust Act (Chapter 501) or the Minnesota Charitable Solicitations Act (Chapter 309). If 4-H units either 1) expect annual revenues to exceed \$25,000 or 2) expect to solicit contributions in excess of \$25,000 on an annual basis, they must register with the Charities Division of the Minnesota Attorney General's Office. In addition, the 4-H unit would have an annual filing requirement with the Attorney General's Office that will include an attachment of the federal Form 990 filing.

## **Any Questions?**

***When does 4-H collect sales tax?*** Any 4-H group can sell up to \$10,000 of items, meals or drinks each year without having to impose the Minnesota sales tax on these sales. This exemption is allowed for any nonprofit youth group, such as a 4-H club or a Girl Scout troop. Besides this dollar exemption, any 4-H club can have up to 24 days of sales tax-exempt fundraisers per year. There are a few conditions on the 24-day law, such as the requirement that the fundraiser cannot last over 120 hours.

***Does 4-H itself pay sales tax?*** No, unless involved in "taxable sales". Yet each county needs to apply for its own sales tax exemption number or it may wish to have a unit using the tax exempt number a great deal apply for its own.

***Is 4-H a 501(c)(3)?*** Yes. A ruling issued to the Department of Agriculture by the Internal Revenue Service on April 24, 1946, recognized that 4-H clubs were exempt from Federal income tax under section 101(6) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1939, which corresponds to section 501(c)(3) of the 1986 Code. A ruling issued to the Department of Agriculture by the Internal Revenue Service February 9,

1973, recognized that all of the affiliated 4-H organizations authorized to use the 4-H name and emblem by the Department of Agriculture are eligible for inclusion in the original ruling of April 24, 1946. When needing to provide proof of 501 (c)(3) status, contact your County Extension Office.

***Unsure if you need a gambling license?***

Your County Extension Office can help with the laws governing your group's raffle fundraiser and related questions.

***What are “bargain sales”?*** Have you ever tried to get the best deal on a piece of equipment? Or tried to find funds but come up just a little short? Perhaps the vendor would be interested in a bargain sale and becoming a donor. A bargain sale is when the donor has in part sold the item and in part gifted the item. This allows your 4-H program to acquire assets for less than the fair market value while the donor receives a tax credit.

***When does 4-H need a tax ID number?***

4-H organizations need a tax identification number to have checking, savings or CD accounts. Any identifying numbers may be obtained by filing an *Application for Employer Identification Number* (Form SS-4) with the IRS. You may wish to download the form from the IRS web site at [www.irs.ustreas.gov/prod/forms\\_pubs/form\\_s.html](http://www.irs.ustreas.gov/prod/forms_pubs/form_s.html).

**Federal and Minnesota Tax and Compliance Resources**

**Internal Revenue Service**

WEB Page Addresses:

<http://www.irs.ustreas.gov>

<http://www.irs.ustreas.gov/businesses/index.html>

1-800-829-1040

**State of Minnesota Secretary of State**

Business Services Division  
180 State Office Building  
100 Constitution Avenue  
St. Paul, MN 55155-1299  
651-297-5353

Management Assistance Program for Non-profits (MAP)

2233 University Ave. W., Suite 380  
St. Paul, MN 55114-1629  
651-647-1216

Email: [map@mapnp.org](mailto:map@mapnp.org)

**Dissolution of Funds**

- Upon dissolution, all 4-H club's/group's assets and financial records must be turned over to the County Extension Office. Funds will be turned over for deposit in the County 4-H Federation/Leader's Council to be used for 4-H Youth Development programs.

**Document Retention**

- 4-H financial records need to be kept for varying amounts of time. Use the following as a guide:
  - Financial records are “money in/money out” type would normally be kept for five years.
  - Important financial records such as the Annual 4-H Financial Report form, review/audits, 990/990EZ, sales tax records, etc. must be kept for seven years.
  - Federal or grant money may have specific requirements, always check with the grant writing source.

# 4-H Projects



## 4-H Projects

Projects are a series of educational experiences and the foundation used by 4-H for helping youth develop life skills. By understanding the importance of project work, you will be better able to guide both the youth you work with and the project volunteers you recruit.

### Developing Life Skills

The goal of 4-H programming is to provide developmentally appropriate projects and activities for youth to:

- Experience life skills.
- Practice them until they are learned.
- Be able to use them as necessary throughout a lifetime.

Through “learn-by-doing,” youth both learn and apply these skills appropriately. Life skills are nothing more than the abilities and skills that youth can learn to help them be successful in living a productive and satisfying life.

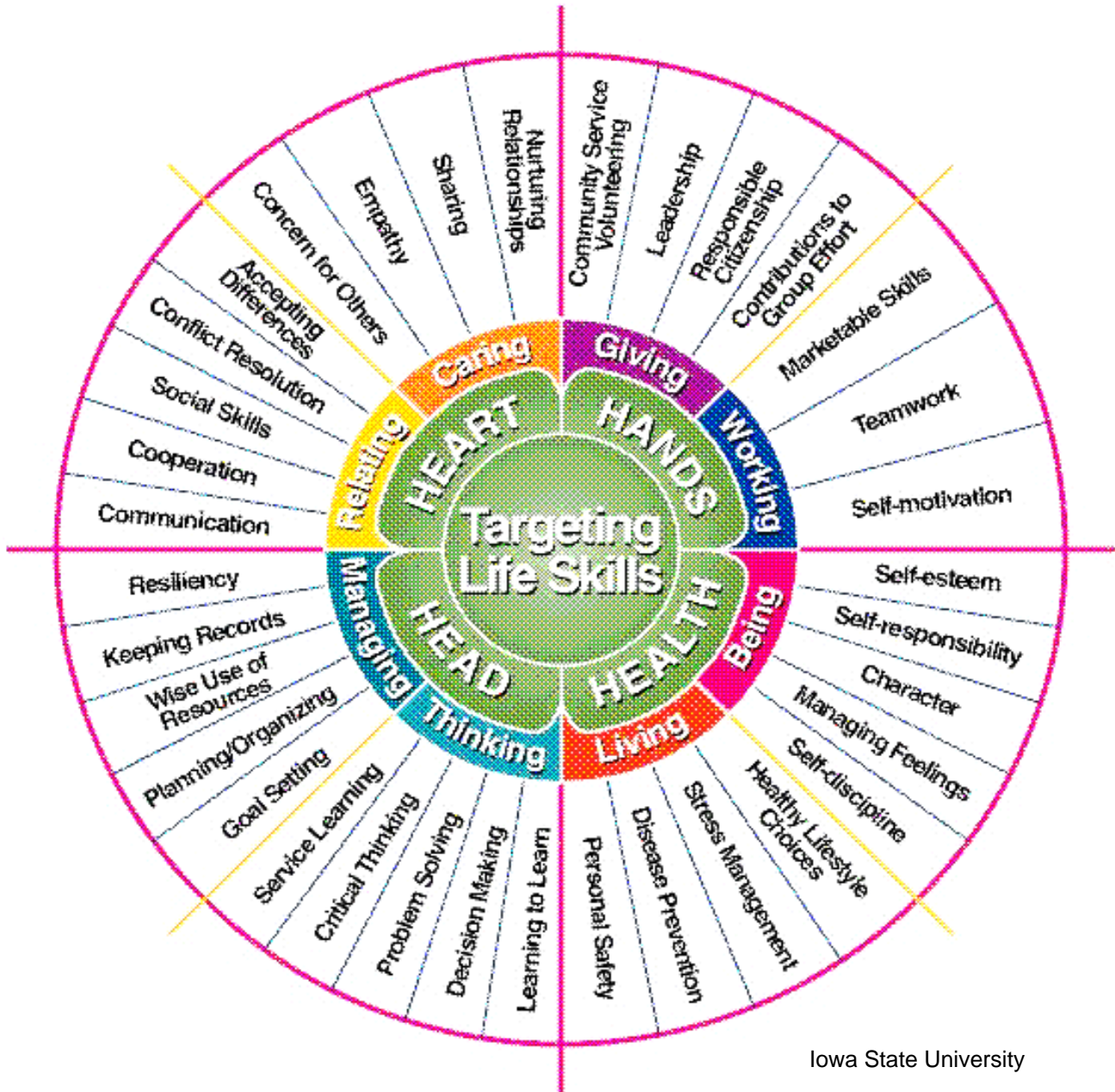
The *Targeting Life Skills* model developed by the Iowa Extension Service (following page) identifies life skills that are the goal of our 4-H experiences. Each 4-H experience should be planned with one or more of these skills in mind.

## The Learning Environment

The 4-H club setting enhances the benefits of project participation by providing a positive learning environment. To help create a positive learning environment for 4-H members, keep the following in mind:

- Young people learn best in an atmosphere of warmth and acceptance.
- Members must have clear, self-determined goals.
- Each youth has different abilities. The same learning method will not be equally successful with all members.
- Learning requires motivation. Self-motivation comes from basic needs, personal preferences, and feelings of self-worth and belonging. External motivation is based on incentives and awards received from others.
- Youth must be actively involved in selecting and carrying out their learning activities.

## Targeting Life Skills



Iowa State University

- Self-evaluation (that is, the member's own assessment of his/her achievement and what is needed to "make the best better") is the most meaningful kind of evaluation.
- It is important to remember that while the printed project materials outline a variety of planned learning experience and activities, you also need to recognize, create, and build on "teachable moments".

Try these methods to enhance project learning:

- Encourage inquisitiveness, show where and how to find answers to questions.
- Brainstorm creative solutions.
- Ask questions.
- Encourage members to become more independent and make their own decisions.
- Encourage individual expression within the group.
- Use a short, simple demonstration or illustrated talk.
- Involve members in role playing.
- Arrange a tour of personal interest to members (e.g., a food tour which shows where things come from or how they are used, etc.)
- Combine teaching methods that allow members to use all five senses.
- Praise and reward good work, interest, cooperation and the acceptance of responsibility.
- Avoid overly competitive situations.
- Avoid comparing efforts of one child to another.
- As appropriate, use games during meetings to increase energy level and fun.

The Leader's Guide (or Helper's Guide) for most 4-H projects will state the age group for which it was designed. Many projects have been developed in a series, with each level building on the previous.

This enables you to select activities from different levels of the same project to tailor learning experiences for members who are at different levels of development.

Encourage youth to select project activities that stretch their current abilities and are still appropriate for their developmental stage.

See the section on *Understanding Members* for information about understanding age-group characteristics. Note: Cloverbuds participate in activities rather than projects. (See the 4-H Cloverbud Leader Handbook for information.)

As the 4-H member grows in knowledge and experience, the leader's role should change gradually from experiences being more adult directed to being more member directed.

### **Selecting Projects and Materials**

With over 50 projects to choose from (as listed in *4-H Today* and the back of the 4-H enrollment card), guiding members in their selections can be an overwhelming task. You may recruit other volunteers in your club or group to take on this task with the youth.

Consider the following when guiding a child in selecting a project:

- Interests, needs, and capabilities.
- Opportunity for sufficient challenges and growth.
- Availability of equipment, space, funding.
- Number of other members in the project.
- Availability of leadership for the project.

Youth may select as many projects as they like; however, it is more rewarding for youth to only select those that they can realistically complete. For younger members, two to three projects may be appropriate. Members are more likely to complete a project when:

- You set standards for performance together.
- They take part in planning what they will do to meet these standards.
- There is a caring adult to support and work with the youth.
- Group gatherings are friendly and fun.
- They feel they are important with important things to do.

Youth should be encouraged to utilize the variety of curriculum resources (*4-H PLUS* Sheets, records, manuals) that 4-H has available to them and then supplement with other resources as needed.

*4-H PLUS* Sheets provide basic information about the project area with resources and ideas listed to get youth started in the project. Records are designed as “Basic” or “Experienced” and are described in more detail later in this section.

Manuals or bulletins are designed specifically for the project area. They are mostly workbooks that guide the youth’s learning. Youth will also find it helpful to learn how to obtain and utilize other resources for their project work. Some ideas are listed on the 4-H PLUS sheets and in the manuals.

Encourage youth to learn from others in the club, volunteer project leaders or others in the community. Visit with your local Extension Staff for other available resources. Ask about the Minnesota 4-H Curriculum Guide and check out the Center for Youth Development’s web site ([www.fourh.umn.edu](http://www.fourh.umn.edu)) for other resources.

## Setting Project Goals

Project goals are set at the beginning of the 4-H year to guide learning throughout the year. Goals should be based on what the member already knows and what they would like to learn. Ideas for things to do and learn can be found in 4-H resources (*PLUS* sheets, bulletins, manuals) or by talking to parents, project leaders, or other community members.

The project goal has three parts:

- Action—how you will do something;
- Results—what you are going to do; and
- Timetable—when you are going to do it.

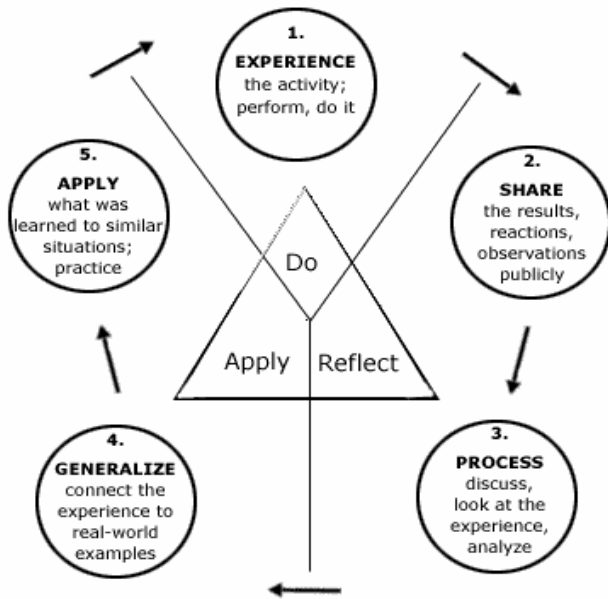
Examples of goals may be “I want to learn how to bake two kinds of cookies by January 1st” or “I want to train my dog to sit and lay down before the county dog show.” 4-H members should write goals down and share with parents and project leaders.

*Acknowledgements: Getting the Most Out of the 4-H Project Experience: Developing Project Work, University of Florida. 4-H Project guide, North Dakota State University. Goal setting: Leader’s Guide to Helping Youth, University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension, 2000.*

## Experiential Learning in 4-H Projects

The 4-H program has a long history of involving youth in “**learning by doing**” activities. The **learn-by-doing activity** serves as the base for the Experiential Learning Process, which adds processing steps to help youth deepen the project learning. Much of the 4-H project literature is designed around the

experiential learning model. The experiential learning process is divided in five major steps.



- **Do:** Youth does the activity.
- **Share:** The youth shares what happened, the results of the experience and their feelings about it.
- **Process:** They decide what is important about what they did and learned from the experience. They analyze the experience and reflect back upon it to determine what was most important. Discuss how questions are created by the activity.
- **Generalize:** The young person personalizes the experience, determines why it is important and applies it to real life.
- **Apply:** Youth determine how what they learned can be applied to a similar or different situation.

Through experiential learning, youth learn subject matter content related to their projects. By experiencing the

process, they learned applies to the greater world and how their knowledge can be used in different situations later in their lives.

Questioning is the primary method of helping youth consciously move through the experiential learning steps.

## Records

4-H record keeping is helpful in teaching important life skills, such as self-discipline, decision-making, goal setting, wise use of resources, communication, sharing, etc.

Record keeping encourages reflection — understanding and thinking about the how’s and why’s of an experience or activity— which enables youth to apply their learning in other situations. MN 4-H divides record keeping into “Basic” and “Experienced” levels so youth can select which best fits their needs.

Record keeping contains four basic elements: Preparing, Doing, Sharing and Reflecting.

**Preparing** is done at the beginning of a project. Youth develop goals and plans for accomplishing them.

**Doing** encourages the youth to keep track of progress and details of their work along the way, noting challenges and successes.

**Sharing** is one of the important values developed through 4-H. Each youth is encouraged to have some element of sharing their project or activity with others. Younger youth may feel most comfortable sharing just within their own club or group. More experienced youth may share their project work through service to their community.

**Reflecting** may take the form of a story or journal that encourages the thoughtful looking back at the youth's experience and naming the learning and growth that has happened over time.

Some clubs devote time at meetings for helping members with their records periodically throughout the year.

### **Role of Project Leaders**

Project leaders are caring adults or older youth, that focus on the positive development of each youth by using project experiences as the tool.

Many 4-H clubs will recruit parents, other adults and older youth to become project leaders. Project leaders work more closely with the youth in the group who have enrolled in that specific project for the year.

Club project leaders are challenged to guide individual members and conduct two to five project experiences for them. These may be meetings before, after or as part of regular group meetings; tours to appropriate places for the project; work sessions at their home; etc.

Project leaders, older youth or a professional in your community may come as a guest presenter for a project or club meeting.

The local Extension Office may have specialized resources for project training; check it out.

Remember it is important that leadership in your club/group be shared, not only for your own well being, but also to develop leadership skills in others.

### **Showcasing Project Work**

Many 4-Hers look forward to the opportunity of exhibiting their project work at the county fair or achievement day. Exhibiting at a county fair or achievement day is not a requirement of being enrolled in 4-H or project work. These experiences are just another opportunity for project learning. Project evaluation and recognition happens in any of a variety of ways.

Exhibits at a Minnesota 4-H exhibition, especially the non-livestock projects, are evaluated utilizing conference judging. Youth bring a representation of their work in each project to an evaluator who will have a personal conference with each youth.

Conferences generally focus on the growth and development of the youth, as well as, the quality of their project's product. Evaluators may even ask specific questions from the recommended 4-H curriculum for the project.

Evaluation guide sheets for various projects are available so youth can become more comfortable with the process ahead of time.

Your support, reinforcement and encouragement add to the depth and meaning of their experience: *How'd it go? What did you learn from the evaluator? Do you have some ideas to try next year? Way to Go! You've come a long way this year!* Remember, this is a learning experience for the youth. Not everyone can come away with purple ribbons but with your help, everyone will come away a winner!

## **Celebration**

Recognition is important in positive youth development. Everyone needs to feel valued for his/her contribution. Many clubs/groups find ways throughout the year and at the end of the year, to recognize the work of the youth.

Having youth give a short show and tell or demonstration about their project, tours to homes, exhibiting at meetings or with other clubs and then celebrating their progress might be examples.

Other clubs present medals, pins, pencils, etc. at the end of the year for every project completed. Whatever your club decides to do, be sure to avoid equating the worth of project achievements with worth of the youth.

Remember, in 4-H, we are less concerned with the volume of the project content taught than about the volume of caring and nurturing of the youth. The youth need to know that in 4-H they can find someone they can count on, someone who is there when they need a person for support in their project work.



# Volunteering



For over 100 years, 4-H Extension staff have partnered with volunteers in delivering 4-H programs. We believe in and rely on volunteers from all areas of the state, from all walks of life and of all ages.

Today, our volunteer force is as strong as ever; helping both adults and youth to improve themselves, their quality of life and their communities through an enthusiastic sharing of information and ideas. You have joined the ranks of over 11,000 4-H volunteers who engage in the delivery, support, management and administration of 4-H programs throughout the State of Minnesota.

Without your time, talents and expertise we could not provide the high quality programs that touch approximately 150,000 youth each year. We welcome you and thank you.

**In support of our volunteer partners, the Minnesota 4-H program believes that:**

- Volunteers are critical to the fulfillment of the mission of Minnesota 4-H and are non-paid staff.
- Volunteers bring a richness in life experiences and skill that is beneficial to furthering positive youth development.
- Volunteers are stakeholders in the program in which they are a part.
- Volunteers deserve a clear expression of expectations (including the energy and commitment involved).
- Volunteers need to be matched with a role that is compatible with their skills and the mission of Minnesota 4-H.
- Volunteers need to clearly know who their supervisor is and how to be in contact with him/her for clarification, understanding and assistance.
- Volunteers require and deserve quality training that helps them to accomplish the role they have accepted.
- Volunteers are not to be exploited but held accountable for their commitments and for upholding the highest principles of positive youth development.
- The voluntary agreement between volunteers and the University of Minnesota Extension may be severed by either party at any time.
- The time of volunteers needs to be respected and valued.
- Volunteers need and deserve appropriate recognition for their work that advances the 4-H mission.

It is our vision (Toolkit 23) that Minnesota 4-H volunteers stand apart as being motivated by positive purposes in helping youth become competent, caring and connected citizens of character in their communities.

Beyond the basics that will prepare you for your volunteer role and the support as you carry it through, you should benefit personally from your relationship with the University of Minnesota Extension. You will have access to educational resources, build friendships with other volunteers, discover new interests, develop new skills and have an impact on your community. We hope you will take full advantage of these opportunities.

### **Responsibilities of 4-H Volunteers to the University of Minnesota Extension**

Since Minnesota 4-H volunteers act as representatives of the University of Minnesota Extension when performing assigned duties, they have the responsibility to:

- Represent their county and University of Minnesota Extension programs with dignity and pride by being positive role models for youth.
- Conduct themselves in a courteous, respectful manner and exhibit good sportsmanship.
- Adhere to and enforce the rules, policies, and guidelines established by the University of Minnesota's Center for Youth Development and its staff.
- Refrain from the use of physical or verbal abuse.
- Refrain from inappropriate or unwanted touching of youth or adults.

- Refrain from destructive, offensive or sexually inappropriate behavior.
- Refrain from the possession or use of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs.
- Avoid smoking and using tobacco products at 4-H events when youth are present.
- Respect the property of others, including clothing, personal items, equipment and facilities.
- Operate machinery, vehicles and other equipment in a responsible manner.
- Accept responsibility to promote and support the University of Minnesota Extension to develop an effective 4-H youth development program.

*MN 4-H Volunteer Enrollment Form (1998)*

And, additionally to:

- Obey the local, state, and national laws.
- Make all reasonable effort to assure that 4-H youth programs are accessible to youth without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status or sexual orientation.
- Recognize that verbal, sexual, physical abuse, and/or neglect of youth is unacceptable in 4-H youth programs. Report suspected abuse to supervising staff.
- Treat animals humanely and teach 4-H youth to provide appropriate animal care.

Professionals (or the professional's delegate) engaged in education are mandated reporters of abuse and neglect of children or vulnerable adults or a pregnant woman's use of a controlled substance for non-medical reasons during pregnancy. For 4-H, this means anyone who is employed by the University of Minnesota Extension and engaged in education. Extension volunteers are not mandated reporters, but a volunteer needs to immediately contact his/her supervisor to determine whether something needs to be reported by the supervisor.

### **4-H Volunteer Leadership Roles**

Volunteers are adults or youth who have agreed to fill defined roles in planning, implementing and evaluating the 4-H club program. Basic club volunteer roles include, but are not limited to:

**4-H Club Leader.** Provides leadership to the overall organization and operation of a 4-H club (Toolkit 24).

**4-H Club Co-Leader.** Assists the Club Leader in providing leadership to the overall organization and operation of a 4-H club (Toolkit 25).

**4-H Project Leader.** Arranges learning experiences for 4-H (Toolkit 26).

**4-H Activity Leader.** Arranges learning experiences through group activities and events such as Share-the-Fun, camping, softball, club outing, etc. (Toolkit 27).

**4-H Youth Leader.** Assumes responsibilities for working with the local 4-H club or group in a specific leadership capacity under the supervision of an adult leader.

Volunteers fill significant teaching and management roles to assist salaried staff members in fulfilling the 4-H mission. Volunteer 4-H leaders are the **key** to successful 4-H programs. They enable more youth to be involved in 4-H through quality local 4-H club and 4-H Adventure experiences.

### **Volunteer Screening**

The University of Minnesota Extension takes pride in the quality of adult leadership in the 4-H Youth Development Program. Indeed, we believe that 4-H youth development volunteers have the best interests of youth and 4-H youth development programs at heart when they choose to become volunteers. Yet, child abuse is a fact in our society. Unfortunately, there is no sure way to detect a child molester or perpetrator, of any kind of child abuse, in advance of attempted or actual abuse.

University of Minnesota Extension staff minimize these risks by learning all they can about applicants for volunteer positions: their experience with children; what motivates them to want to be volunteers with youth; and how they would handle discipline.

All 4-H adult volunteer applicants must be screened before being placed into their roles and identified as 4-H volunteers (this includes chaperones). This process also conveys the message that 4-H youth development programs are hostile environments for child abusers. By getting this message across, would-be abusers will be discouraged from trying to participate in Extension youth programs. Contact the local Extension Office for volunteer screening packets.

The utilization of this volunteer application process in the University of Minnesota Extension 4-H Youth Development Program is one risk management strategy to reduce liability and child abuse risks. This application process also strengthens the recruitment and placement of volunteers within the 4-H youth development program and increases the credibility of 4-H. The screening process includes four equally important parts:

1. Completion of the *Volunteer Application*.
2. Completion of the *Background Check Authorization*.
3. Receipt of three personal references.
4. Completion of an interview by 4-H staff.

The application process is confidential. Information provided is only available to those persons with a clear need to know.

Remember this procedure works to reduce risks and provide a safer environment for all those involved with the 4-H program. We desire to have quality staff and volunteers working with the youth of the community. Youth remain our top priority, and the University of Minnesota Extension desires to promote an environment which encourages positive growth.



## Insurance Coverage

### Volunteer Liability

Registered 4-H youth development volunteers are covered under the University of Minnesota policy of Indemnification and Defense of Employees approved by the Board of Regents, March 8, 1985 when their work is accepted, contracted for, or consented to by the University and is under the direction and control of the University.

The University of Minnesota Extension volunteer application process provides tangible documentation of the volunteer's role and responsibilities, as well as, those agreed to by the University in return. Adult volunteers are expected to act in good faith and without negligence in the performance of their duties in order to minimize any chance of creating a University liability. Adherence to MN 4-H Volunteer Screening Policy is one way to reduce liability risks and to afford reassurance of University support to the volunteer.

### Accident Insurance

Accident insurance is a form of health insurance that provides limited medical coverage in the event of injury. Most people are likely to have their own form of health or accident insurance; however, to be certain that everyone is covered, some type of accident insurance should be provided to all members and adult volunteers enrolled in a 4-H program.

Two types of coverage are available:

1. **Annual accident insurance:** covers enrolled youth and adults (optional but recommended) while participating in or attending a regularly approved and adult-supervised 4-H group activity during the entire program year.
2. **Special activity insurance:** covers all youth and adults participating in a specific, adult-supervised 4-H activity.

Consult your 4-H staff for specific details in your county.

### **Automobile Coverage**

Personal transportation to and from 4-H program activities is the responsibility of the 4-H member, youth participant, parent, volunteer or other driver. If you use your personal vehicle for 4-H business, your vehicle must be insured in accordance with the Minnesota State Motor Vehicle Law. No liability, collision, comprehensive or no-fault insurance coverage is provided by University of Minnesota nor are you covered for side trips.

By law, you are financially responsible for any auto accidents when you are at fault. If a volunteer is driving a University of Minnesota vehicle, they are covered by University vehicle insurance.

### **Preventing Accidents and Preparing for Emergencies**

In the 4-H Youth Development Program, our most basic responsibility is to provide a safe, wholesome and healthy environment for young people and the adults who work with them. This responsibility of positive youth development is important and requires our attention.

Overall, 4-H has a very good history of providing safe environments for children and protecting them from potential risks.

The reduction of exposure to risk is called “risk management.” To maintain this record of safety, programs and activities need to be systematically reviewed to be sure that provisions are provided for dealing with health, safety, legal and liability issues.

As a volunteer for the University of Minnesota Extension 4-H Youth Development Program, you are expected to be a proactive leader in the development of risk management plans for all 4-H events and activities.

There are different levels of risk for the assorted 4-H programs and activities. Do not assume that young people, their parents or other adult volunteers are always aware of and understand the possible risks and unsafe conditions associated with an activity. Consequently, it is extremely important to inform youth and their parents beforehand, so that they can understand the level of risk associated with the events and activities in which they wish to participate.



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**Assumption of risk** is a term that is considered when determining liabilities that may arise in certain situations.

'Assumption of risk' means that whenever someone chooses to do something, he or she (or their parent/guardian) assumes a level of risk. Responsibility for action is passed along and shifts from Extension staff/volunteers to parents/children. Rules need to be enforced and dangerous/unsafe activities must be stopped. It is often difficult to discipline others' children or to even cancel an activity/event, but remember that providing a safe, wholesome environment must be the primary consideration.

As a University of Minnesota Extension Volunteer, you share the responsibility for the health and safety of those who participate in the activities you lead. Basic guidelines for protecting yourself and program participants are listed below.

### **Basic Guidelines**

- Do not deviate from the instructions given during training classes or from the procedures detailed in printed program materials.
- Before using any tool, piece of equipment or hazardous material for the first time, request safety instructions and follow them.
- Explain and demonstrate safety procedures and the proper use of tools and equipment to those you teach or lead. Before beginning an assignment or starting a program, find out where the first aid kit, list of emergency procedures and emergency phone numbers are located. If none are available, take these items with you.

In case of an accident, medical emergency, natural disaster or other major incident put a responsible individual in charge of your group before starting to follow the emergency procedures. Contact the supervising staff member or other designated emergency contact as soon as possible and refer all inquiries to that person.

**Do not make any statement or give any information to media people or anyone other than University of Minnesota Extension staff and emergency personnel.**

If an incident of any kind results in personal injury or property damage, the following information should be gathered immediately or as soon as possible:

- Name, address, phone number of injured person(s).
- Complete description of events causing injury or property damage.
- Name, address, phone number of witness(es) (VERY IMPORTANT).

This information should be immediately reported to the Regional Extension Office.



## Miscellaneous Risk Management Issues

### Securing Facilities for 4-H Programs

When you are seeking to conduct your 4-H events/activities in a facility outside of your home, you may be asked for a Certificate of Insurance or a hold harmless form.

A Certificate of Liability Insurance can be requested from your Regional Extension Office. Or, a property owner may ask you to provide a “hold harmless” form which will cover their facility. Or, a facility may request of you an “additional insured” form in which we would add the volunteer to insurance for actions caused by our 4-H activities.

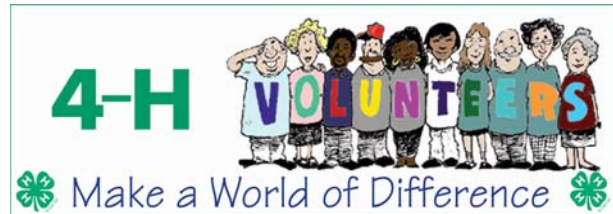
Volunteers **are not** authorized to sign or complete these kinds of forms/contracts on behalf of the University of Minnesota Extension. Contact your Regional 4-H Extension staff for assistance.

### Mailing Lists

To protect the privacy of 4-H members and volunteers, the names of 4-H leaders and members are not to be furnished to any individual or group entity outside of the University of Minnesota Extension, unless authorized by the State 4-H Leader. With permission, the name and contact information of adult volunteers may be shared with people who inquire about joining a 4-H club or becoming involved in a 4-H activity/event.

## In the Toolkit

- *Vision for MN 4-H Volunteers* (Toolkit 23)
- Position Descriptions:
  - *4-H Club Leader* (Toolkit 24)
  - *4-H Club Co-Leader* (Toolkit 25)
  - *4-H Project Leader* (Toolkit 26)
  - *4-H Activity Leader* (Toolkit 27)





# Public Presentations

## Public Presentations

The public presentation program is one of the most beneficial and rewarding 4-H experiences. It is the one most often credited by 4-H alumni as having given them an edge above their peers, in both college and professional careers. It provides a unique opportunity to develop a positive self-concept and poise, gain self-confidence before a group, learn to express ideas clearly, respond spontaneously to questions and gain subject matter knowledge.

In 4-H, public presentation opportunities are available at the club, county, regional, state, and national level. Providing an opportunity for every member to publicly demonstrate their learning is an expectation clearly stated in the *MN 4-H Charter Application*. 4-H Demonstrations are an excellent way to provide this opportunity to your members.

### Why do 4-H members give demonstrations?

When people see something, they remember it much longer than when they merely hear it. 4-H members learn many useful and interesting things in their project work by doing them. Demonstrations are a great way of sharing what has been learned. This also helps the 4-H member

retain and refine what they have learned. Demonstrations add interest to 4-H meetings and build the self-confidence and speaking ability of the demonstrator.

- **Demonstrations**—a sophisticated term for show and tell. When we want to learn something, we often ask, “Will you show me how?” The person who shows us how is giving a demonstration. He or she is showing and telling.

There are different stages of demonstrating

**Mini** – members usually begin giving a very simple and short (2-5 minutes) project talk or demonstration at the club meeting. The member learns how to give a demonstration, to speak in front of a group, and to develop poise and confidence.

**Project** – member learns to get more involved in the planning, researching and organizing of a more in-depth demonstration (7-15 minutes), while continuing to gain more poise, confidence and creativity in the presentation.

Other types of presentations include the Illustrated Presentation and the Youth in Action presentation.

**Illustrated Presentations**—these are another type of show and tell where you use visual aids and not the real product. You provide the information you want to share while utilizing charts, posters, PowerPoint, pictures, models, etc.

**Youth in Action**—the member develops a concern to those who are listening, shows a greater mastery of the subject, and has completed a more in-depth study of the topic. The member becomes a “teacher” and tries to make sure that the audience is learning during the presentation. There is a dialogue between the member and the audience in a “hands on learning” experience.

More in-depth information and tools to help in planning a demonstration are available in *“Getting Started in 4-H Demonstrations”* (Toolkit 28).

In some counties, another opportunity for youth to develop public presentation skills is through the 4-H Communication Arts Program.

**Communication Arts Program** of which includes public speaking, creative writing, interpretive reading and photo-journalism.

**Public Speaking**—original oratory. A participant uses his/her own composition to discuss a selected topic intelligently with a degree of originality, in a persuasive manner to inform or

The participants should be given latitude in the ideas expressed but held closely accountable for the manner in which he/she expresses them in the delivery.

**Creative Writing**—is a written essay. A short literary composition dealing with one topic designed to inform, explore, express and/or persuade the reader of the author’s ideas on designated topics.

**Interpretive Reading**—oral presentation. Presenting the written work from any *published* source in a creative, inspiring, or thought provoking manner.

**Photo-Journalism**—newspaper reporting style display. A combination of visual and written media to interpret newsworthy or human interest events, idea or object.





# Service Learning

Service learning is an educational method where students learn and develop by engaging in action service that meets the needs of a community. Service experiences are coordinated with a community service program or school, as well as the community. It includes structured time for youth to reflect on their service experience and influences lifelong learning.

Service learning is a four-stage process: preparation, action, reflection, and celebration.

## Elements of Service Learning

### Community Need

- The service learning projects meets a genuine community need. More information can be found in *“Identifying a 4-H Service Project”* (Toolkit 29).
- The collaboration includes multiple partners who benefit from the project.

### Youth Voice

- Youth assume active leadership roles in choosing and planning the service project.
- Youth plan and implement the reflection, evaluation, and celebration.
- Youth take on roles and tasks that are age appropriate.

## Planning

- An understanding of service learning is developed. A sample *“4-H Service Learning Planning Guide”* is available to assist in the planning process. (Toolkit 30)
- Project planning includes training, team building, and project orientation.

## Integrated Learning

- The service learning project has clearly articulated knowledge, skill, or value goals that arise from the curriculum.
- Skills learned in the community setting are integrated back into the curriculum.

## Meaningful Service

- Both the youth and the community achieve significant benefits.
- Youth understand how they can impact their community as a result of the service learning project.

## Reflection

- Opportunities for youth to reflect should occur before, during, and after the service learning project. The reflection should connect the service experience with the curriculum. Sample *“4-H Reflection Activities”* are available (Toolkit 31).

- Youth will employ critical thinking skills that will help them grow on a personal, social, and intellectual level.

### **Evaluation**

- All partners, especially youth, should measure progress toward the learning and the service goals throughout the project.

### **Celebration**

- An opportunity for all partners to be recognized for their accomplishments should be included. This also serves as closure for the project.

### **Reflection Questions:**

1. What do you think you will do and what impact do you think you will have?
2. What needs did/does/will your project help fill?
3. What are the causes of those needs?
4. How do people contribute to this problem? How do we help to solve it?
5. What expectations do you have about your service experience?
6. Did anything surprise you? If so, what?
7. What did you do today that made you feel that you made a difference? Why?
8. Did anything happen that made you feel uncomfortable? If so, what and why do you think it made you feel this way?
9. What did you do that seemed to be effective or ineffective in service to others?
10. How does your understanding of the community change as a result of your participation in this project?
11. How can you continue your involvement with this group or social issue?

12. How can you educate others or raise awareness about this group or social issue?
13. What are the most difficult and most satisfying parts of the service you are performing? Why?
14. What do you think is your most valued contribution to the project?
15. Is there a person or activity you find interesting or challenging in your project?
16. How do you see your role with this project? How does that compare with how others may see your role?
17. Have you learned from any disappointments or successes from your project?
18. Has there been a problem situation that you want to discuss with your teacher?
19. How is your service relevant to what you are learning in class?

### **Activities by Themes**

#### **Animals**

- Work at or raise money for a shelter.
- Match animals in shelters with families.
- Care for a neighbor's pet.
- Write to companies protesting animal testing.
- Make and sell identification tags for dogs and cats.
- Organize a lost animal search group.

#### **Children**

- Read to or tutor younger children.
- Organize a mitten drive for needy children.
- Visit sick children.
- Organize a book drive to give books to children.
- Organize after school activities for latchkey kids.

### **Citizenship**

- Organize a voter registration drive.
- Support an important piece of legislation.
- Organize a community poison control campaign.

### **Community Development**

- Mow an elderly neighbor's lawn.
- Renovate an abandoned house.
- Beautify a playground.
- Clean up a stream bed.
- Paint and repair the homes of senior citizens or low-income residents.
- Start a petition for necessary traffic signals.
- Make your neighborhood safer.
- Paint over graffiti.

### **Elderly**

- Read to the elderly.
- Shop for the elderly.
- Do odd jobs for the elderly.
- Organize an "adoption" program for lonely elders.
- Teach computer skills to the elderly.
- Lead an exercise program for the elderly.
- Rake leaves or shovel snow for the elderly.

### **Environment**

- Clean up litter at school or in the neighborhood.
- Organize a recycling drive.
- Plant trees.
- Raise money to improve a playground or park, or to repair a sidewalk.
- Grow a school garden.
- Help a community that has been impacted by a natural disaster.

### **Health/Safety**

- Create a presentation for how to handle health or crime emergencies.
- Set up prevention groups to patrol neighborhoods.
- Coordinate an after school hotline.
- Organize a bike, rollerblade, scooter, or car seat safety demonstration.
- Develop and teach a babysitting course.
- Organize a community health fair.

### **Homeless**

- Collect food, toiletries, or clothing for the homeless.
- Work at a soup kitchen.
- Collect and distribute blankets.
- Collect toys for shelters.

### **Diversity**

- Organize ethnic awareness days.
- Tutor people whose second language is English.
- Encourage sites around town to become wheelchair accessible.
- Help people with special needs.
- Develop a peer conflict mediation program.

