

# The Basics of Starting a 4-H Club



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# What is 4-H?

4-H is delivered by Cooperative Extension—a community of more than 100 public universities across the nation that provide experiences where young people learn by doing. For more than 100 years, 4-H has welcomed young people of all beliefs and backgrounds, giving kids a voice to express who they are and how they make their lives and communities better.

4-H youth:

- Have fun
- Meet new people
- Learn and do new things
- Gain life skills
- Build self-confidence
- Practice responsibility
- Set and achieve goals
- Receive recognition for their efforts and accomplishments

## **Why Participating in a Youth Development Program is Important:**

The goal of youth development programs is to help youth become fully prepared for the transition to adulthood. Youth development professionals offer youth opportunities within healthy environments to master the competencies they will need to make this transition. In order to master skills, research has shown that young people must have certain needs met such as:

- safety and structure
- a sense of belonging
- a relationship with a trusted adult
- experience with gaining competence and mastering skills
- independence and control over some part of their lives
- self-awareness and the ability and opportunities to act on that understanding
- a sense of self-worth and the ability and opportunities to contribute

4-H clubs and activities provide youth opportunities to meet these critical needs.



# What Makes 4-H Different?

- As one of the first youth development organizations in America, 4-H opened the door for young people to learn leadership skills and explore ways to give back to their community. 4-H revolutionized how youth connected to practical, hands-on learning experiences while outside of the classroom.
- 4-H is the largest youth-serving organization with over 7 million participants nationally.
- 4-H clubs have been active in the United States for over 100 years. It is now worldwide.
- 4-H offers over 200 projects and activities for youth to choose from ranging from animals and agriculture to science and technology.
- 4-H programs, curricula, and procedures are research-based and are developmentally appropriate.
- 4-H programs are based on the needs of youth and their parents.
- 4-H provides access to resources of Land Grant University Cooperative Extension Systems.
- 4-H provides members access to county, state, and national 4-H opportunities.
- 4-H membership is open to all youth ages 5 – 18, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, or religious background.
- 4-H program delivery employs experiential learning strategies.
- 4-H encourages active involvement and participation by youth and adults in all aspects.
- 4-H relies heavily on youth and adult volunteer leaders to provide a critical support system for 4-H.
- 4-H provides quality training for volunteer leaders recognizing that training is essential for effective 4-H programs.
- 4-H adapts to and supports the mobility of youth and parents.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Research has shown that:

- 4-H'ers are nearly 4 times more likely to make contributions to their communities.
- 4-H'ers are about 2 times more likely to be civically active
- 4-H young people are nearly 2 times more likely to participate in Science, Engineering and Computer Technology programs during out-of-school time.
- 4-H'ers are nearly 2 times more likely to make healthier choices.



# 4-H Facts

## 4-H Colors

The 4-H colors are green and white. Green is nature's most common color. It symbolizes spring, life, and youth. White represents purity and high ideals.

## The Four Hs



## 4-H Pledge

I pledge my head to clearer thinking,  
My heart to greater loyalty,  
My hands to larger service,  
and my health to better living,  
for my club, my community, my country, and my world.

## 4-H Motto

"To make the best better"

## 4-H Emblem

The official 4-H emblem is a green four-leaf clover with the letter H on each leaf. Because of its historical importance, the 4-H emblem has a special status; it is federally protected under the U.S. Code (Section 18 USC 707) and belongs to Congress. Federal legislation regulates use of the 4-H name and emblem. Chartered clubs have permission to use the emblem and consider themselves 4-H Clubs.



# What is a 4-H Club?

4-H Clubs are the most traditional and effective delivery mode of 4-H programming to youth. Club meetings are learning “laboratories” where members develop social skills including communicating and working with others, practice leadership skills, develop strong character, and become responsible citizens by participating in community service activities. It’s a wonderful way for youth to become exposed to new and exciting experiences and activities in a safe and familiar environment.

## What are the requirements for a 4-H Club?

- At least 5 enrolled youth members, ages 5-18. Special project clubs may have age limits based on programming. For instance, Cloverbud Clubs cater to youth ages 5-7 and a Shooting Sports Club has an age requirement of 8 and up.
- Trained, adult volunteer leaders that are supported by the county 4-H Agent.
- A planned program that is ongoing throughout all or most of the year. Some clubs take summers off.
- Offer opportunities for youth to learn important life skills like leadership by electing club officers and citizenship by conducting community service projects.
- Meet in a safe environment. Many clubs meet at community buildings, churches, or other public spaces.
- Annual Charter.

# Getting Started

Before you start a club, you need to decide:

- What is the need for a club in your community and how can a club help that need?
- Will the club be project-based or general?
- How many meetings do you want to host per month/year (and when – day and time)?
- Where will your club meet?
- Are there other parents or adults willing to assist with your club?

Steps in Establishing a 4-H Club:

- Contact the county 4-H Agent. You will create a 4HOnline account and will have a background check run.
- Attend 4-H Volunteer Leader Training (scheduled by the 4-H Agent) and become familiar with county and state 4-H policies and guidelines.
- Recruit potential club members and possibly other qualified adults/teens that can assist.
- Set a date, time, and location for the first organization meeting.
- Notify 4-H Agent of date, time, and location of first meeting so they can attend.





To learn more about becoming a 4-H Club Leader, please contact the Beaufort County 4-H Youth Development Professional for more details.

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