

Questions and Answers: Chartering of Ohio 4-H Clubs

Q. Why are we chartering 4-H clubs?

A. The National 4-H Headquarters recently took steps to protect the name “4-H” and the 4-H emblem the “4-H Clover”. Users at all levels - county, state and national - have the responsibility to protect its’ use. Each state is required to adopt procedures to provide authorization to “users” of the name and emblem of 4-H.

Q. Who is responsible for protecting the name and emblem in Ohio?

A. O.S.U. Extension is responsible for authorizing and protecting the use of the 4-H name and emblem. In a county or multi-county program area, the local Extension Director or 4-H Extension Educator is responsible for authorization and protection of the use of the name and emblem. Ultimately, the O.S.U. Extension Director and the State 4-H Leader are responsible for use of the name and emblem within Ohio.

Q. When are clubs chartered?

A. All existing clubs need to be chartered and new clubs can be chartered while they are forming. Charters are issued for a period of three years. 4-H National Headquarters requires that all clubs be chartered.

Q. What is the process for getting my Club Chartered?

A. Each Club’s organizational/head advisor will complete a self-review and return a checklist to the 4-H Extension Educator or the Charter Review committee that is appointed by the County 4-H Committee/Council.

Q. How will the Club know if it met the chartering requirements?

A. Since the organizational Advisor will do a self review, your club will be aware of any shortcomings; but, the Chartering Review Committee will make recommendations to the 4-H Extension Educator who will issue charters. A 4-H charter certificate and letter signed by the National Director of 4-H Youth Development will be issued to your club. We recommend that you place the certificate in a frame and present it to your club members as part of your club recognition.

Q. Why do clubs have to have “five members” to be a 4-H club?

A. 4-H is about helping youth develop into competent, caring and contributing members of society. The Ohio 4-H Youth Development Program believes that this best occurs when there is a **group** of youth working and learning together. We value democratic decision-making, the use of committees, election of officers, group relationship building, and group activities. We are requiring clubs, according to National 4-H guidelines, to have at least five youth members from three different families to be a club.

Q. What are the age requirements for my members? Can I have a mixture of both 5-8 year old Cloverbuds and 9-18 members to make up my club of five members?

A. Yes, this will meet the minimum requirements. Cloverbuds may meet as part of the larger group, but they should conduct their own learning/activity experience as directed in the Ohio 4-H Cloverbud curriculum.

Q. What if our group has less than five members. Are we banned from 4-H?

A. Clubs that are just forming must work towards getting at least five members. Clubs that have five members and then lose members may work with the 4-H Extension Educator and develop a plan to recruit additional members by the end of the county 4-H program year. Small clubs may be encouraged to merge with other clubs. Our intent is not to punish clubs for low enrollment, but rather to work together to increase the size of your group to impact the value of group learning experiences for the members.

Q. What if my club does not meet the chartering requirements?

A. In order to continue to be called "4-H Club" you must meet these minimum standards. A Club that does not meet the standards will be given a period to work on meeting the requirements. The 4-H Extension Educator and the Charter Review Committee will help you understand what steps need to be taken to meet the requirements. For example, you may be directed to county or State 4-H volunteer training to acquire an understanding of different aspects of 4-H and positive youth development programs.

Q. Why do new clubs have to have their name approved by the county Extension office?

A. We want to make sure that the new club is not using a name that is already being by another club. Occasionally, clubs wish to 'retire' a name after its use for many years. This process will help bring honor to those requesting the name be retired. Additionally, it is important that 4-H club names are appropriate and represent an inclusive environment for current and potential members and their families.

Q. What is a series of experiential learning experiences?

A. The Ohio 4-H program believes that it is important that young people have the opportunity to participate in a variety of "hands-on" activities. Each activity builds upon the knowledge and skills of the previous experience. 4-H experiential learning is planned by Club Officers and the Advisors.

Q. My club has a business meeting and we eat refreshments, but what is this about "hands on learning"?

A. A good 4-H meeting has three components: Social/recreation time (20-30 minutes), business meeting (10-20 minutes), and learning experiences (30-60 minutes). Of course, one meeting may have more or less time spent on any these components. But it is important that clubs provide opportunities for the members to have fun through active learning experiences. This is how children best learn, develop, and gain new knowledge and skills. The 4-H Extension Educator can help you with ideas on how to make your meetings both fun and provide a great learning experience. The 4-H Advisors Handbook can provide you with ideas on how to plan, organize and conduct hands on learning at club meetings.

Q. What is a welcoming and safe environment for a club?

A. Club meetings should be held at a location that 4-H members, parents/guardians, and volunteers may access and is safe from potential harm caused by others. A safe environment provides a secure haven for both physical and emotional well being. A welcoming environment is one in which members' feel that others are glad that they are in attendance at the meetings. Clubs can make their environment welcoming by making sure that everyone knows one another's name, conducting social recreation games, serving refreshments, valuing and respecting others opinions, having club rules and expectations on issues like "respect of others".

Q. Where do I find information on the proper use of the 4-H Name and Emblem?

A. The 4-H Advisors Handbook provides information on the proper use of the name and emblem. See the chapter: Club Management and Organization. Also see the 4-H National Headquarters website at <http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/>

Prepared by the Ohio 4-H Clubs Chartering Committee.
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Ohio 4-H Clubs Advisors Handbook – Club Management – Club Structure
<http://advisorshandbook.ohio4h.org/clubmanagement/structure.html>