

4-H Project Selection

Almost 200 projects are available for 4-Hers. Members are expected to complete the projects in which they enroll. The 4-H project has been described as the member “gateway” to the rest of the 4-H programs. From our standpoint, it might be better to turn the description around to say that the project is the “gateway” to the boy or girl. Projects provide the basis of the 4-H program by offering various educational experiences. Carrying out a project will help the member “Learn to Do by Doing” and as well learn why things happen the way they do.

Why projects?

The project is a teaching tool that can be used to develop boys and girls to their maximum potential so long as we view project work as a “means to an end” and not the end in itself. This means that the basic objective of 4-H – the development of the boy and girl – is the most important consideration, not the garment the member makes or the calf he or she raises, or the miscellaneous project her or she completes.

What are projects?

Projects are real-life experiences that help the 4-Hers learn to make sound decisions. Projects put the hands and minds to work. 4-H projects take on a wide variety of interests and activities that are designed to attract boys and girls regardless of their place of residence, economic status, race, etc.

What should projects do for the 4-Hers?

The objectives of 4-H projects are to:

- Create a sense of ownership
- Give satisfaction of achievement
- Strengthen family and community ties
- Provide opportunities for members to develop and use knowledge related to the project
- Provide a leisure time activity to help keep youngsters away from undesirable activities
- Explore career opportunities and thus the need for continued education



What are guidelines to selecting projects?

Parents and the member should know and fully understand what is expected of the 4-Her before he or she enrolls in a project. Projects are selected in the early spring when enrollment cards are filled out. Usually younger members should limit their projects to one or two. Older, more experienced, members may be able to do several different projects, including those that are more difficult. Factors that parents and leaders should consider in helping a club member select a project are:

1. The project should meet the needs and interests of the member. The problem here, however, is that in many cases the youngster does not really know if he would like a particular project without first giving it a try.
2. The project should be appropriate for the age and ability of the member.
3. The member must have enough time to devote to the project.
4. Is the project acceptable to the family and can it fit into the family situation?
5. How much will the project cost?
6. Is there an opportunity for ownership and management responsibilities?
7. Are there leaders to help with the project in the club or are the parents willing to help the member with the project?

How are projects conducted?

Project work is conducted through various activities and events such as:

- Project meetings
- Regular club meetings
- Tours to visit projects of members
- Family activity at home
- Exhibiting products at shows, fairs, etc.
- Record keeping

Where is project information found?

All projects are listed in the [Ohio 4-H Family Guide](#). Each family should receive one copy of this resource at the beginning of each year. The family guide includes a brief description of each project as well as a guide, which indicates the difficulty level of each project. 4-H advisors also have information on project completion requirements, judging requirements and exhibit guidelines. Project guidelines for each project are inserted into each book for easy reference. The OSU Extension office has all project books for review at any time during the year.

Announcing Ohio 4-H Project Central! Interested in getting a close look at a project book? Want to rate your experience with last year's project? Members and project helpers can preview project books AND share feedback about their project experiences on a new website called Ohio 4-H Project Central. Check out the website now at www.ohio4h.org/projectcentral for easy instructions and a direct link.