

Frequently Asked Questions about 4-H



4-H Frequently Asked Questions

Some of these questions were used from the OSU Extension publication "40 Questions you always wanted answered about Ohio 4-H"
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What is 4-H?

4-H is a non-formal, educational program for youth, regardless of race, color, creed, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, gender or handicap.

How old do you have to be to be a 4-H member?

Eligibility for 4-H membership begins when a child is age 5 and is enrolled in kindergarten as of January 1 of the current year (Cloverbud). The 5-8 year olds are considered Cloverbuds (mini-4-Her's) that don't compete at the level of traditional 4-Her's but they participate in meetings, projects, and special camps.

Official membership to the 4-H club program begins when a child is at least age 8 and enrolled in 3rd grade as of January 1 of the current year. Ohio 4-H membership ends December 31 of the year in which an individual attains the age of 19. Membership begins when an eligible individual is enrolled in a club or group that is under direction of a trained adult who has completed the OSUE volunteer selection process, and that is within the scope of Ohio State University Extension.

Who is in Charge of 4-H?

County, District and State 4-H Professionals, who are staff members at the Ohio State University Extension, are responsible for the Ohio 4-H program.

How can a young person get involved in Ohio 4-H?

Call your Ashtabula County Extension office (440) 576-9008 to learn how your child can join 4-H and how you can contribute as a 4-H volunteer.

What is a 4-H Volunteer?

A 4-H volunteer is anyone who contributes their time, energies or talents to 4-H and is not paid by Ohio State University Extension for their contributions. For more detailed information look at the [4-H Volunteer Selection Policy Page](#).

What does a School Enrichment Volunteer Do?

A school enrichment volunteer is an individual (including a classroom teacher) who works with short term 4-H programs, offered during regular school hours, to enrich the formal classroom curriculum. A 4-H School enrichment program focuses on hands-on experiences, provides real life applications of knowledge gained, increases member understanding of difficult concepts and encourages the development of student members as young adults.

What happens at the first club meeting?

Get acquainted and have fun with a group mixer and/or some refreshments. Show and talk about 4-H projects and activities the group might enjoy. Discuss when, where and how often the group will meet. 4-H clubs have officers and committees to conduct business. 4-H has written materials available for club presidents, vice-pres., secretaries, treasurers, news reporters, recreation leaders and health and safety chairs. It is a good idea to wait until the second or third meeting to elect officers so members know each other and are better prepared to select the most qualified people.

How often does a club meet?

Some clubs meet every week for a month or two and some meet once or twice a month all year long. This depends on the type of club, what its members want to do and the time advisors have available. The most important thing is to schedule meeting times so members and their families can remember and include them into their schedules. It is a good idea to pass out a year long calendar to the members' parents so they know ahead of time what to expect.

Should 4-H Clubs have dues?

This depends on the club's need for funds. If the club needs money for some meaningful project, members usually decide to charge minimal dues or conduct money-making activities. Check with your local Extension office for specific fund raising guidelines.

What do 4-H Members do at meetings?

4-H members usually do four general kinds of things at club meetings: business, educational, social and service activities.

What do advisors do at meetings?

Advisors should be in the background at meetings to advise and provide support to members as they conduct their activities. It is important for advisors to work with club officers ahead of time, so that they and the members (not the advisors) can be "front and center" during the meetings.

What does a 4-H project cost?

There is a small charge for project books. The total cost to complete a 4-H project varies a great deal. A member enrolled in foods might use supplies from around the home (to practice the skills being learned) and have no direct expense. A member who buys and keeps a Saddle Horse might invest hundreds of dollars, same as any Market Animal such as: Beef, Poultry, Hogs, Lambs, Dairy Beef Feeders, etc. Advisors, parents and members should discuss costs when projects are selected. Costs should be realistic for the family budget.

What is a self determined project?

In this project, a member with a special interest designs a project different from existing projects. It may be completely new or an adaption, specialty or advanced stage of an existing project. Members should discuss such projects with their advisors. You must fill out a [Self Determined Project Guide](#) and turn it in to the judge.

Do 4-Her's work individually or as a group?

Both. Some projects, such as the international projects or Meals Outdoors, are more fun if done as a group. Others, such as making an outfit or creative writing, are best done individually.

How do you explain the role of a 4-H Volunteer to a parent?

Help parents understand that 4-H volunteers are not being paid. Invite parents to a 4-H meeting or hold meetings in homes so they can see how volunteers work with the 4-H group.

What does the four H's stand for?

Head, Heart, Hands and Health. The 4-H Pledge states:

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.

Why do guys and girls like 4-H?

They have educational and fun experiences with their friends at meetings, social activities, tours, camps and fairs. They learn by actually doing interesting things, such as taking care of animals, taking pictures, doing community service and cleaning up the environment.

What does a 4-H Club Advisor do?

A club advisor works with a 4-H community or project club that involves two or more youth who meet regularly to conduct club business, plan the club program and enroll individually or as a group in one or more 4-H projects. 4-H club advisors serve in three roles. An organizational advisor serves as the primary communications and information liaison between the county 4-H professional and the club members, their parents and other advisors in the club.

A project advisor assists 4-H members with their 4-H projects. An activity advisor works with members in planning and conducting club activities. However, all of these advisors work together as a team in supporting the members of a 4-H club and their parents. There are six basic kinds of 4-H volunteers: club advisors, middle managers, school enrichment volunteers, special emphasis volunteers, committee members and youth volunteers.

How do you organize a 4-H club?

Have a meeting with youth who are interested in joining 4-H and adults who are willing to help. Publicize the meeting through schools, churches, community centers or any place where young people and their parents can be reached.

Who names the 4-H Club?

The members of the club (with guidance from advisors).

Are there enrollment deadlines?

4-H clubs may organize any time of the year. However, most counties have enrollment deadlines by which time a member must be enrolled with their enrollment forms turned into the County Extension Office in order for members to participate in certain programs (camps, county fairs, awards programs, speaking contests, etc.) Our current membership deadline is April 15 in Ashtabula County in order to participate in all the fair activities.

How large should a 4-H club be?

This depends on the age of the members, where they meet and the leadership available. The ideal club is large enough for members to have fun and learn together, but small enough for everybody to feel a part of the group. Most Ohio 4-H clubs have 10 to 20 members, and two or three advisors.

Who plans the club's programs?

Members of the club plan the program. With small groups, everyone might be involved in program planning at a meeting of the entire group. With large groups, it might be better to get ideas from every member and let a committee, led by the vice president, put together the club program.

What are 4-H projects?

4-H projects are specific areas of planned experiences, such as training pets, making clothing, growing plants and building rockets. 4-H projects are in depth learning experiences for 4-H members. [Approximately 200 projects are currently available](#) , with project literature written by faculty members of [The Ohio State University](#) .

Are 4-H members expected to do their own project work?

Yes, with help. 4-H is a learn-by-doing program. Advisors, key leaders, teen leaders or parents may tell or show a member how, but members are expected to do the work themselves.

Do members have to participate in county judging to complete their projects?

No. Members are not required to exhibit their work or participate in competition in order to complete their 4-H project. However, participation in competitive activities and exhibits is encouraged and educational, recognition and public awareness opportunity. Fair premiums, ribbons and other award incentives and symbols of recognition are given in many counties for those who choose to participate. Also, you could win a chance to compete at the State level at the [Ohio State Fair](#) in Columbus.

How do you encourage parents to help?

Ask them. Be specific about jobs with which the 4-H group needs help. Think positively. People who expect help will probably get it. Offer a choice of jobs. People have different amounts of available time, interests, skills and abilities. Ask 4-H members to invite their parents to become involved.



The 4-H Motto
"To Make the Best Better"