4-H Officer's Guide

_____
Year

_____
County

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Club Name_____

Organizational Leader _____

President _____

Vice President _____

Secretary _____

Treasurer _____

News Reporter_____

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Preface:

Democracy -- Citizenship -- Leadership

You have learned in school that our government is a DEMOCRACY. Some of the democratic principles of our form of government include the rights and freedoms of speech, religion, ownership of property, elections and voting.

A system of government does not work by itself. As CITIZENS we have responsibilities to make the democratic system work by becoming involved, obeying the laws, and being concerned for the rights of other people. This requires LEADERSHIP -- that is, individuals and groups willing to make democracy work by being actively involved in issues and supporting candidates and programs that benefit the citizens of the country.

We may at times complain about our national government, however, the same democratic principles are followed in many organizations in our society. Government in states, counties, cities and towns follow them. Many churches follow democratic principles to conduct their business.

What does this have to do with officers of a 4-H club? A 4-H club is an excellent example of how a democratic system works in a group where youth – 4-H members – have a chance to learn about democratic principles and to practice leadership skills. The citizens (members) of the club learn to have elections, present ideas, vote and help put the ideas into action.

What works in a 4-H club will work with other groups. State legislatures, garden clubs, labor unions, school boards, business board of directors, farm organizations as well as 4-H clubs develop programs, elect officers, conduct meetings, make motions, have programs, have picnics, work, learn and have fun.

That is what being a 4-H officer is all about. You are giving leadership to help the club reach it's goals. The experience will help you learn what it means to be a good citizen, accept responsibility and enjoy the rights of a citizen.

Officers are Important!!!

Congratulations!! It is an honor to have been selected as an officer of your 4-H club. You have an important job to do in conducting the business of the group. Your fellow 4-H members have shown faith in your ability by electing you to your position. Determine to do the best job you can during your term of office.

Special duties are assigned to each office. To be a good 4-H officer you must know what is expected of you and how to carry out your responsibilities. You must also know the duties of other officers so that all of you can work together as a team.

This 4-H Officer Guide will help you prepare for the job ahead. Read it carefully. You may also obtain help from your leader, junior leader, or others who have served as officers in the past. Plant to attend officer training meetings if they are held in your county. Learn as much as you an about how to work as an officer.

Responsibilities of 4-H Officers:

Being an officer of a 4-H club carries special responsibilities. Review them often to determine how well you are doing.

- Help the club set goals for the year, then work with all of the members to reach those goals.
- Help the club work together in harmony. The club does not belong to the officers nor is it necessary for the officers to do **everything**. Make certain everyone has a chance to speak, even the youngest and newest members of the group. Help all members feel good about belonging to the group. Be willing to give credit to others.
- Help other members be involved. Encourage younger members to participate in discussion and activities and older members to do some of the more difficult tasks.
- Be fair to everyone and respect their rights to ideas and opinions.
- Be a good example for the club. Be on time, be courteous to members and leaders, and do your best on tasks assigned to you.

Everyone Can Be Involved

For the 4-H club to operate smoothly and get things done; each person must perform the duties assigned to them. Briefly they are:

President --
Presides at the meeting of the club.

Gives leadership to the club by:

- planning the meeting with the other officers and leaders,
- appointing committees, assigning tasks to members,
- keeping informed of activity in the club,
- representing the club when necessary.

Vice President --
Presides when the president is absent.

May have special leadership assignments:

- chair the program committee.
- lead the opening pledges to the flag.
- introduce program speakers and guests.
- help the officers and leaders when necessary.

Secretary --
Keeps a record (minutes of the meeting) of the activities and decisions of the club and:

- reads minutes at the business meeting.
- sends meeting reports to the Cooperative Extension Office in the county.
- writes letters for the club. The secretary's book has more information.

Treasurer --
Keeps the club's money and:

- keeps an accurate record of money received.
- pays the club's bills.
- gives a treasurer's report at the business meeting. The treasurer's record has more information.

News Reporter --
Spreads the news about the club and:

- prepares news reports about the activities of the club for the newspapers, radio and TV stations.
- keeps a scrapbook of news clippings. The news reporter's guide has more information.

Other Officers or Assignments --
The club may decide to have additional officers or give special assignments to individuals in the club.

Examples include:

- Recreation leader -- has recreation planned for the meeting when needed.
- Music leader -- is prepared to lead group singing or have special music at the meetings.
- Safety leader -- could present a safety tip or lesson at meetings. Watch for safety in club activities.
- Citizenship leader -- be responsible for participation in 4-H citizenship activities. Leading pledges to the flag, organizing a Community Pride activity are examples.

Committees
A committee (a small group of members) may be appointed to do certain tasks for the club. See the section on USING COMMITTEES.

Members
The members of the club should be just as involved in the meetings and activities of the club as the officers. Listen to what is going on. Ask questions when discussions or reports are not clear. Bring ideas to the meetings and be willing to talk about them. Discuss the ideas of others. Vote when a motion is being decided. Members should get involved in as many of the club activities as possible.

Planning for the club

Besides conducting the club business meeting, the officers may also help with planning the club program for the year. The club program will include:

- goals for the club to work toward.
- where the meetings will be held.
- what will be done at each meeting.
- what activities the club will have.

Planning for the club may be done in several ways. If the club is small, all members and the leaders may work together to plan what will be done for the year. If the club is larger, the leader, junior leaders and the officers may work out the program. Still another way is to form a number of committees to plan parts of the program. A recreation committee may plan the fun part of the program while the activities committee plans for taking part in various county or state-wide activities.

The club's program should be recorded in the secretary's record on the page provided.

Using Committees

The well-organized 4-H club will make use of committees to carry out certain parts of the club program. The president, usually with the assistance of the 4-H leader or the other officers, may appoint members to the special or standing committees. Committees may also include parents.

A **special** committee is one appointed to do a certain job. The president may appoint several 4-H members and a parent to plan and carry out a club tour. After the tour is over the committee's work is completed.

Standing committees are those appointed to server for the entire year. Examples of standing committees and duties they may perform include:

Membership Committee -- Tells others about 4-H and brings new members into the club. Helps start a new club.

Citizenship Committee -- Responsible for the flag salutes, patriotic programs, community service to others.

Health and Safety Committee -- Encourages club to plan special health and safety activities such as the home fire check.

Recreation Committee -- Club recreation conducted by a small group of members.

Each committee should have a chairman. A report of progress may be given at the business meetings.

Planning the Meeting

The business session is only one part of the 4-H meeting. Recreation, guest speakers, demonstrations, project lessons and other activities may be included. Decide if the club president will preside through the entire meeting or just at the business session.

Good meetings do not just happen. They are the result of:

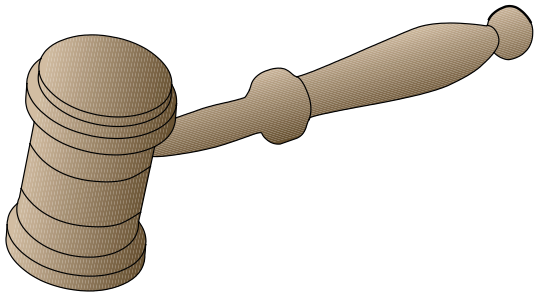
- officers who know their job.
- planning before the meeting.
- use of good meeting procedures.
- interested and involved members.

It is a good idea for the officers to meeting with the 4-H leader and/or junior leader before the meeting. Make a list of everything which must be done.

The order of business provides an outline for the meeting. The president should know who will give each report or lead the discussion on topics brought before the club.

Is there unfinished business from a previous meeting to be decided? The secretary's minutes should have a record of topics not finished at the last meeting.

Any member of the club may bring up new business. It is helpful if the president knows about new business ahead of time. Have some ideas in mind of how to decide the question to be discussed. Planning a picnic? What are the suggested dates and location? Can a committee plan the food and activities? Have someone in the club be ready with suggestions.



Making it Work

Set up the meeting room so all of the members can hear, speak and vote. If guest (parents) are present, provide a place for them to sit. The president and secretary should have a table from which to work. A flag set and 4-H banners will add to the meeting.

Start on time. Move through the business promptly without wasting time. Keep the meeting as short as possible, but still finish all of the business before the club. Encourage all of the members to express themselves. Don't let discussion go too long before taking a vote or making a decision.

Discuss one topic at a time. Permit only one person to speak at a time. Members should receive recognition from the president before speaking. A member who wants to discuss a county fair question while the picnic date is being decided is "out of order." The president should ask the member to discuss only the picnic question until it is decided.

A club or group can make a decision several ways. If everyone is in favor of a proposal (like going on a picnic), there is consensus and it may not be necessary to pass a motion. The president may ask "Does everyone agree we want a picnic?" If yes, there is consensus and the group is ready to set a date.

If the members have different ideas, a motion and a second to the motion will help the group decide the

question. Many books on parliamentary procedure (rules for conduction meetings) say a proposal can only be presented to the group as a motion with a second required before discussion and a vote. A better way for informal groups (like many 4-H clubs) is to discuss the topic first to find out all the possibilities. When all of the ideas have been presented then have a member make a motion.

Example: A picnic after the county fair seems like a good idea. Several dates are suggested. Some families have conflicts. When the date which seems best is determined someone makes the motion the club picnic be held on August 20. The motion is seconded. After any final discussion, the motion is voted upon.

The secretary should record "consensus decisions," as well as motions in the minutes.

Follow up to the meeting is important. Are there appointments or assignments to be made? Arrangements for the next meeting to be made? The president should follow up on all club action as soon as possible. Example: Appoint the picnic committee as soon as possible. Call a speaker or order a DVD for the next meeting within a day or two if the president is expected to do so.

Presenting a Motion

The motion is the way in which the group takes action or makes a decision. The club may use the following procedure for: presenting a motion, discussion, amending motions, debating a motion, and voting on the motion.

Only one main motion can be considered at a time. Each main motion must be acted upon before another main motion can be made.

> Member: (rises) **Mr. (or Madam) -- President.**
>
> President: (recognizes the member) **John Smith.**
>
> Member: **Mr. President, I move that our club paint the picnic tables in the city park for our community service project this year.**
>
> President: **Is there a second to the motion?**
>
> Another member: **I will second the motion.**
>
> President: **It has been moved and seconded that the club paint the picnic tables in the city park as a community service project this year.**

If no one will second the motion, the president will announce: **The motion is lost for want of a second.**

Discussion or Debating the Motion:
When a motion has been made and seconded, the members have an opportunity to discuss the motion before voting. The discussion may lead to a change in the main motion or it may simply give the members more information.

Amending Motions:
Some members may feel painting picnic tables is not needed. The motion may be changed by amending it.

> Member: **I move to amend the motion by changing the painting project to the playground equipment instead of the picnic tables.**
>
> Another member: **I second the amendment.**

After discussion the chairman will call for a vote by saying: **All in favor of the amendment say 'aye.' All opposed say 'no.' The 'aye's' have it and the amendment is carried.**

The amendment must be voted on before the main motion.

President: **Is there further discussion on the main motion, as amended, before we vote?**

Voting
A majority vote (more than half) is enough to pass a motion except in a few important cases. Two-thirds vote is required when a change in the constitution and bylaws of a group and/or changes in the rights of the individuals are proposed.

There are several methods of voting.

- Voice vote -- President calls for vote by saying: **"All in favor say 'aye,' all opposed say 'no.'"** The results of the vote must be announced by the president.
- Division of the House -- If the vote is close, it may be necessary to have a division of the house to get an accurate vote. The president says: **"All in favor raise your hand (or stand)."** The vote is counted. **"All opposed raise your hand (or stand)."**
- Roll Call -- This method is used when necessary to know how each member stands on the question. The secretary reads the names, the members respond by **"Aye"** or **"No."** A member not wishing to vote responds by saying **"Present"** or **"Not voting."**

- Written Ballot -- This method is used when a secret vote should be taken, such as in elections. Ballots or slips of paper are provided. The president will appoint "teller" to count the ballots.

The president reports the results to the group. **"The motion is approved,"** or **"The amendment is lost,"** or **"John Smith has been elected."**

If the motion is carried, the president takes the necessary action to carry out the motion. The president may give instructions to other members or to a committee to take the necessary action.

Conducting the Meeting

Here is a suggested procedure officers may use as a guide in conducting club meetings. Check with the 4-H leader before the meeting to plan what needs to be discussed. (Words in bold face indicate suggested statements the president may make.)

Order of Business

1. call to order
2. roll call, recognize guests
3. reading and approval of minutes
4. officer reports
5. committee reports
6. announcements
7. unfinished business
8. new business
9. plans for the next meeting
10. adjournment

Call to Order:
The president opens the meeting by rapping on the desk with a gavel. (The gavel, the presiding officer's symbol of authority, may be rapped at opening of the meeting to gain attention, to add emphasis, and at adjournment. The gavel has no special parliamentary significance and should not be overused.)

The meeting of the 4-H club will come to order. We will open with...

The president may open the meeting by having the club sing a 4-H or patriotic song, by giving the 4-H pledge, the 4-H motto, the member creed, or by giving the flag salute. Vary the openings used.

Roll Call:
The secretary will call the roll which will be answer by...

The secretary calls roll and reports numbers present.

Minutes
The secretary will read the minutes of the (date) meeting...

Secretary reads minutes of the last meeting.

Are there any additions or corrections to the minutes? (pause) If there are no corrections, the minutes stand approved as read.

If corrections are needed the secretary will make them. The president will then say: If there are no further corrections, the minutes stand approved as corrected.

Officer Reports:
The officers will give their reports.

Limit the reports to meetings and other events that have been held or action of the officers on club business.

The president wishes to report that...

Mr. (or Madam) Secretary, is there any correspondence?

The secretary reads any correspondence that may have come to the club. If action is required the matter should be referred to the proper committee or taken up as new business.

We will now have a report of the treasurer.

The treasurer stands and reports money received and spent since the last meeting, as well as the balance on hand.

The reporter will inform us of news reports concerning the club.

Committee Reports:
Are there committee reports, either standing or special?

Both standing committee and special committee reports should be accepted by the club. The president may say *"The report of ... committee is accepted."* Recommendations of the committee must be voted on before they are put into action. The safety committee recommends the club sponsor a bicycle safety rodeo. A motion for the club to sponsor the activity must be made, seconded and voted upon.

Announcements:
Are there announcements to be made at this time?

Announcements may be discussed at this time. A good announcement will include who, what, where, when and why.

Unfinished business:
Is there old or unfinished business to come before the club?

Unfinished business from previous meetings should be taken care of at this time. The secretary should call attention to unfinished business in the minutes of the previous meeting.

New business:
If there is not further unfinished business, new business is now in order.

Take care of all new business one item at a time. Anything unfinished must be considered at the next meeting.

Is there other new business to come before the club?

The business meeting may be adjourned before the program or recreation for the meeting is presented. The club may prefer to recess the business meeting for the program and recreation and adjourn when all is finished.

Plans for the next meeting:
May we have the date, place and program for the next meeting?

The vice president or person responsible will review plans for the next meeting. Make certain everyone knows the exact time, place, and materials to bring to the next meeting.

Adjournment:
A motion for adjournment is in order.

Member: "I move the meeting adjourn." "Second." The motion is voted upon. Or the president may say: *There being no other business, the meeting is adjourned.*

Elections

At the close of the term of office, it will be necessary to elect officers for the next term or year. The election includes nominating several candidates for each office and voting to decide who will be elected to each office.

A nomination committee may be appointed by the chairman or elected by the group to present a list of candidates for each office. Nominations can be made from the floor (by members of the group).

The president says: "**Nominations from the floor are now in order for president.**" A member, after being recognized by the president, says: "**I nominate John Smith for president.**" The nominations need not be seconded, but must be accepted by the nominee.

After nominations have been made for each office, the president says: "**Are there further nominations?**" If not the president says: "**Nominations are now closed.**" A member may make a motion to close the nominations.

Money Making Ideas for 4-H Clubs

Most groups find it very helpful to have money in their treasury which allows them to do special things for the club or for other people. Renting a DVD, buying a gavel for the president, holding a picnic or carrying out a community service project all require money.

4-H clubs can raise money in many different ways, but should avoid selling merchandise for the purpose of promoting a certain item or commercial brand. Do not allow the name and emblem of 4-H to be used by individuals or organizations outside of 4-H for profit or gain.

There are many good ways for 4-H clubs to earn money for their group by providing special services (like washing cars) or selling products they have made or produced. Some ideas to consider:

- membership dues (should not be large or keep anyone from being able to join the club)
- carnival
- food sale
- car washes
- personal services auction
- garage sale
- soup and pie supper
- selling pumpkins (Halloween)
- pancake feed
- paper recycling
- pop bottle, can recycling
- watermelon feed
- refreshment stand at events
- paint mail boxes or house numbers

- help a store with inventory
- window washing or yard clean up service
- sponsor a movie or speaker
- sponsor a community talent show
- homemade candy or cookie sale
- ice cream social
- other ideas from the club

A special money-making activity requires extra responsibility of the treasurer. An accurate record of all money received and money paid out is necessary to determine how much money was raised with the fund-raising activity.

The Cooperative Extension Service

4-H is part of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the USDA. UNL Extension staff are available to help your 4-H club in many ways. They may help the club organize and give suggestions for the program. Project manuals and other materials are provided to 4-H members and leaders through the Extension in the county. Extension agents provide training sessions for 4-H members and leaders and work closely with the County 4-H Council in planning and conducting the county-wide 4-H program. Extension staff also work with many adult programs.

4-H Emblem

The emblem is a green four-leaf clover with a white letter “H” on each leaf. Each “H” represents one of the four-fold developments of Head, Hands, Heart, and Health.

4-H Colors

Green and White

Green - Nature’s most common color and emblematic of springtime, life, and youth.

White - Symbolizes purity and high ideals.

4-H Motto

To Make the Best Better.

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.