

# Cuming County 4-H Welcome Packet

*For youth ages 8-18 as of January 1*



# 4-H Welcome Packet



## ***How is 4-H Organized?***

Many people think of 4-H as an independent organization, but that isn't quite accurate. 4-H is the youth development program of the National Cooperative Extension System, through the United States Department of Agriculture.

This means that your 4-H extension staff members are supported with resources from Land Grant Universities across the nation. Just take a look at our research-based curriculum and you can feel complete confidence in 4-H as a sound, educational organization. Also, we've been around for over 100 years!

Your 4-H staff members work for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and serve as faculty members for the University, the Land Grant University in Nebraska. The extension staff members who give primary leadership to the Cuming County 4-H program are below.

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## Dear New 4-H Family,

Welcome to 4-H! You have just enrolled in one of the greatest youth development programs in the nation. 4-H is the largest out-of-school educational program in the country.

The purpose of this welcome packet is to give you an overview of the opportunities and resources available to help your family have an incredible experience in 4-H. Keep in mind that this is only an overview. Your best way to stay informed is to read the Cuming County 4-H Newsletter. Your family will start receiving this free, monthly publication once we receive your 4-H enrollment forms.

The 4-H program is so large and the opportunities so vast that it can sometimes seem a little overwhelming when you are new. Just keep in mind that your family's 4-H experiences can be tailor-made to fit your goals, schedule, and interests. That is one reason why 4-H is such a great program for Nebraska families. You can be involved as a whole family, learning, and growing together.

When describing 4-H to someone new, we often use the analogy of a super department store. 4-H is like a "store" full of wonderful, fun, positive educational programs. It has pretty much every type of workshop, project, contest, trip, conference, camp, or activity you could possibly want, and things fit into your schedule and your budget. Your club leader and extension staff members are like the "greeters" at the front of the store to help you find what you need. We are here to answer your questions, so please do not hesitate to call.

Keep in mind that the leader in your club is a volunteer. Like all of us, your leader is more than willing to do his/her part. Be, he/she also wants help. Ask your leader what you can do to support your child's club. If we all take a small piece of the pie, it makes everyone's involvement more manageable and fun!

The local Extension office in Cuming County is located at 200 S. Lincoln St., Room 50 in West Point, NE. We are located on the bottom level of the Cuming County Courthouse. Office hours are Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Again, welcome to the wonderful world of 4-H!





## New 4-H Member Checklist

In order to have a successful first year in 4-H, please follow this checklist:

- Choose a 4-H club and call the leader
- Fill out the online enrollment ([v2.4honline.com](http://v2.4honline.com)) and pay the fee by the deadline
  - 4-H Online with \$5.00 fee
- Choose 4-H projects
- ID animals by the deadline, if applicable
- Attend 4-H meetings regularly
- Parent involvement in the club
- Let the Extension Office know if you'd like to be added to the weekly s'more newsletter
  - Sent out every Monday morning via email
- Work on 4-H projects and take advantage of county workshops and contests
- Read the 4-H Newsletter and visit the 4-H website frequently
  - [cuming.unl.edu](http://cuming.unl.edu)



## Parent & Guardian Roles

First and foremost, 4-H is a family program – a place where parents and their children can learn and grow together. In 4-H, you, as the parent or guardian, are very important. You are always invited and encouraged to participate in all 4-H club activities. We recognize every family's schedule is different and you may not be able to attend every club function, but there are many different ways that you can contribute to your child's 4-H group.

Your 4-H club leader will want to know about your interests and talents, and how you would like to support your child's 4-H group. Because 4-H has so many diverse experiences, we have discovered that every adult can find a parent volunteer role that matches their interests and the club's needs. Some possible helping roles include providing refreshments, supplies, or other resources for a club meeting, helping members with their projects, chaperoning a club field trip, organizing a club service project, or coordinating the club's end-of-the-year recognition program. Your club leader may have other suggestions.

### **As a parent or guardian, these are the following roles you need to fulfill:**

- Provide transportation for your child to and from 4-H events.
- Help your child learn to recite the 4-H pledge.
- Attend 4-H club functions with your child whenever possible. Children 5-7 (Clover Kid members) should always have a parent or guardian attend meetings with them
- Guide your child as he or she selects a 4-H project and help develop goals that are challenging, but also realistic. Encourage project work by making it a family learning experience.
- If your child serves in a leadership role within the club, help him or her fulfill the duties of the office.
- Read the Cuming Count 4-H Newsletter each month so you will know the details of upcoming events, dates, as well as deadlines. You will automatically start receiving this publication when you enroll in a 4-H club.
- If you have online access, visit the county 4-H Web site for the latest information and resources at: <http://extension.unl.edu/statewide/cuming/>
  - The 4-H staff will provide county-wide training on portfolios, demonstrations, and other important 4-H learning experiences. Try to participate in these classes and workshops. By understanding more about our various 4-H programs, you can help your child excel and take advantage of all that 4-H has to offer.
- Attend your club's end-of-the-year celebration with your child and attend 4-H Achievement Night (the county-wide awards program) as a family. Recognition always means more to children when their family is there to share it with them.

## 4-H Frequently Asked Questions

**What do the four "H's" stand for on the 4-H clover emblem?** The "H's" stand for: head, heart, hands, and health, which reflect the whole development of a child.

**What is the 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."

**What is the 4-H motto?** "To Make the Best Better"

**What are the 4-H colors?** The 4-H colors are green and white.

**How did 4-H begin?** 4-H began in the early 1900's as Corn Clubs for boys and Canning Clubs for girls. Although the program has changes a lot through the years, it has always been a program designed to help children become productive members of their communities. The national 4-H program celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2002.

**Do I have to live on a farm to join 4-H?** No, although 4-H began as a program for rural children, today 4-H is available for ALL YOUTH whether they live on a farm, or in the city.

**How old do you have to be to join a 4-H club?** Children can join a 4-H club as soon as they are 5 by January 1 of the current year and they can stay involved until their final year of eligibility – the year they are 18 on January 1. In addition, many colleges offer collegiate 4-H clubs, including the University of Nebraska-Lincoln!

**What is the 4-H year timeline?** The 4-H year begins in January and continues through the following December. The 4-H year kicks off with a kickoff party in March. Youth work all year long to complete projects to enter in the County Fair. Then, the year ends with a county wide 4-H Achievement Celebration in November.

**Can we join 4-H at any time during the year?** Yes, each club will establish their own "cut off" date for accepting new members for the year. However, all youth must be enrolled with the Nebraska Extension 4-H Office by **June 15** to be eligible to exhibit in the Cuming County Fair or any competitive 4-H events.

**Are clubs organized by age divisions?** 4-H clubs operate best when the members are in a similar age group, preferably within a couple of years of each other. However, some clubs operate with children from a wide variety of ages. It is a little more challenging to keep everyone's interest when there is a wide age span, but there are also the benefits of younger

youth learning from the knowledge and example of older youth, and the leadership opportunities for older youth.

**What are the age divisions for competitive events?** A child must be at least eight years old as of January 1 of the current program year to compete in any 4-H event. Most competition is held in the following age divisions: Juniors (8-10), Intermediate (11-13), and Seniors (14-18). However, age divisions do vary from program to program. Always carefully review the registration information for 4-H events.

**What is a Clover Kid?** Children ages five to seven are known in 4-H as “Clover Kids”. These children are full 4-H members and can participate in a wide range of programs and activities, including the fair. However, because research has shown that competition at this age is detrimental, Clover Kid members are not allowed to participate in competitive events. These members do participate in many contests and receive participation ribbons. Their work just isn’t “judged” and compared to other children’s work.

**What does it cost to join a 4-H club?** There is a \$5.00 county membership fee that is paid at the time of the enrollment deadline. If you are planning to exhibit livestock, there is an additional fee for ear tags (\$1.00 each for county tags, \$2.75 for EID tags) and DNA samples (\$7.00 each). Depending on your 4-H project, the cost will vary according to your supply needs.

**How do I stay informed about 4-H opportunities?** Read the Cuming County 4-H Newsletter as it will give you all the details about upcoming programs. If you would like to receive reminders by text messaging, be sure to check and provide that during your online enrollment. You can visit the Nebraska Extension in Cuming County website at: [cuming.unl.edu](http://cuming.unl.edu) We are also on Facebook: *Nebraska Extension in Cuming County*. We also send out a weekly “smore” newsletter via email to all of our families as a quick update to weekly events. Let the Extension Office know, and they can add families to the email list.



## **Your First Step to 4-H?**

You need to begin by selecting a 4-H club in your area. We have provided a list of Cuming County 4-H clubs on our website at [cuming.unl.edu](http://cuming.unl.edu). If you need further assistance, please call the Cuming County Extension office at 402-372-6006.

## **4-H Projects**

### **What is a project?**

Each 4-H member will have an opportunity to select one or more projects to learn about during the year. A project is simply a topic, or subject, the member wants to explore. The member will focus on increasing his knowledge and skills on this topic during the year. Projects are completely self-paced. A member may focus on a project over the whole year, or only spend a few months on a specific project. Similarly, a member may choose to explore the same topic for many years, gaining a real, in-depth knowledge of the project. Another member may prefer to explore a wide variety of projects during his/her years in 4-H. In most cases, the member will end up with one or more finished exhibits to enter in the fair from each project he/she selects. With nearly 150 projects available, there is something to interest every child. There is not a limit to the number of projects a member can select; however parents and leaders should help guide members in setting realistic, but challenging goals. It is always better to complete fewer projects that reflect quality workmanship than to do a "rush job" and complete a lot of poorer quality projects. Project work is at the heart of 4-H. As youth work to complete a 4-H project, a lot more is happening than "just" learning new skills. In fact, project work encompasses all four "H's" - head, heart, hands, and health. Take for instance a young person working on a sewing project. Their project-related activities may involve . . .

**HEAD** *Mental development:* gaining deeper knowledge and reasoning abilities

- Learning how to select a pattern that hopping for fabric, equipment, and sewing notions
- Calculating the correct amount of fabric to purchases for various fabric widths

**HEART** *Emotional development:* developing interests, appreciation, and wholesome attitudes

- Working as a team with fellow club members to select a sewing project to complete
- Caring for others by sewing baby blankets for the hospital

**HANDS** *Skills development:* ability to do, skill in doing, and the habit of doing

- Demonstrating the ability to properly thread a sewing machine bobbin
- Becoming skilled in sewing straight and curved seams that follow the correct seam allowance
- Completing sewing project utilizing correct techniques



**HEALTH** *Physical development:* understanding and appreciation of growing and changing body

- Learning to select garments that are flattering for body shape
- Developing poise and demonstrating good body posture when modeling the garment in 4-H Fashion Revue

**How do we select a project?** In most cases, club members and leaders choose one club project they want to complete during the year. Members will work on that project together at club meetings. A club leader, parent volunteer, community resource person, or perhaps an older 4-H member will teach the club's project lesson. Additional projects are selected by 4-H members and they will be able to work on those outside of their club meetings. They may seek guidance from their parents, leaders, community organizations, or other experts in the field to assist them in acquiring these new skills.

## **The County Fair**

One of the highlights of the year for 4-H members is being able to exhibit their completed projects in the Cuming County Fair, and then hopefully have their exhibits selected for the Nebraska State Fair competition!

**When is the fair?** The Cuming County Fair is held during the month of August. As part of the fair, members have an opportunity to compete in a variety of small and large animal shows, miscellaneous contests as well as entering static exhibits. Also, there are many contests that occur before the fair begins.

**Who can enter the fair?** Any enrolled 4-H member can participate in the fair. The Nebraska Extension in Cuming County office will make available the fair book in the upcoming months as time gets closer. This will list all the 4-H classes that can be entered. For the most part, the classes do not change a lot from year to year, so you can look at previous fair books to get ideas for projects to enter in the fair.

### **How are exhibits judged?**

**Static Exhibits:** All static exhibits are judged earning a purple, blue, red, or white ribbon. In addition, each project area will select an overall winner and they will receive a medal. Clover Kid entries are not judged; each entry received a participation ribbon. Youth receive cash premiums based upon the color of ribbon earned.

**Livestock Exhibits:** All livestock exhibits are judged earning a purple, blue, red, or white ribbon. Additional trophies are presented at the time of the livestock show.

**When are exhibits released:** Entries are not released until the fair closes. Early release is not allowed.

## **4-H PROJECTS & CAREER CLUSTERS**

Throughout the Project Resource Central, each of the eight curriculum areas highlight careers that are related to those particular 4-H projects. These eight curriculum areas provide projects related to the Career Clusters that are linked to Nebraska School Standards. For additional information regarding how 4-H projects relate to careers, check out:

<http://careerexplorer.unl.edu/>

## **Additional Opportunities for 4-H Members**

Cuming County 4-H offers many different contests each year. Whenever possible, our staff tries to conduct the county contest as similar to the state contest as possible, utilizing the same rules, time allowances, and judge's sheets. Call the Extension Office at 402-372-6006 for detailed information.

- 4-H Public Speaking and Public Service Announcement Contest
- 4-H Presentations Contest
- Horse Stampede Event – held in Lincoln
- Companion Animal Challenge – held in Lincoln
- Culinary Challenge Contest
- Cook-Off Contest
- Fashion Revue Contest
- Life Challenge Contest
- Crop Scouting Contest
- Meats ID Contest
- Livestock Judging Contest
- 4-H Adventure Day Camp
- 4-H Clover Kid Camp
- Wisner Stock Show
- Multiple summer workshops
- Achievement Applications – Youth prepare a document summarizing their 4-H experiences, using the online application form.

### **Nebraska Extension – Cuming County**

**200 S Lincoln Street., Room 50**

**West Point, NE 68788**

Office Hours:

Monday – Friday

8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Contact us:

402-372-6006

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