

Leader's Guide to Starting a New 4-H Club

Douglas-Sarpy Counties



UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
Lincoln®



Starting a New 4-H Club

So you've volunteered to be a new 4-H Volunteer leader! Congratulations! You're starting an interesting, challenging and rewarding experience. Because we know you have lots of questions about this new venture, we believe you'll find the enclosed information helpful.

It's often said, "It is better to develop a child than to mend an adult." This, in a nutshell, is the main objective of the 4-H program. In 4-H, volunteer leaders encourage youth to gain knowledge and learn through their project work and club activities. Members learn life skills like planning, decision making and resource management through their project work. Club meetings are learning laboratories where members develop social skills, learn how to communicate and work with others, practice their leadership skills and develop strong character. Through community service activities, members learn how to be responsible citizens who contribute to their communities. Research tells us that youth involved in volunteer activities remain involved as adults.

Members improve their communication skills through club interaction, 4-H record keeping and presentations. They also develop positive attitudes about themselves and others, learn basic health and safety practices and acquire educational and vocational experiences. Each year members are challenged to set higher goals, to become more knowledgeable about their projects and assume greater leadership responsibility within the club and the County 4-H program. All of this does not happen at once, but develops gradually as members continue their involvement in 4-H with the guidance of their volunteer leader.

Your responsibility is to help 4-H members learn specific skills. 4-H members have fun with projects while "learning by doing." Most people remember more if they actually experience something and have an opportunity for some "hands-on learning." Learning takes place within the learner. It is not something that is done to the learner. We encourage skills that will be useful to the young person now and in the future. We help each member develop good habits, experiment with new ideas and practice problem solving skills. By doing this, we help them become self-directed, productive, compassionate, and contributing members of society. A major goal is to teach 4-H members how to think, not what to think. We help develop creative thinking in young people by giving them a chance to make decisions on their own and learn from their own choices. Another goal is to recognize and encourage each 4-H member so he or she feels noticed and important. The most significant recognition that can be given to members is praise and attention. Let them know they are important and what they have done is worthwhile.



NEBRASKA 4-H VOLUNTEER CODE OF ETHICS

Your primary goal as a 4-H volunteer is to help children and youth develop competency in their projects, confidence in themselves and others, connections in their community, and sound character. As a 4-H volunteer, you are to help kids do what they are capable of doing. You are to promote teamwork and leadership while helping the 4-H'ers learn and have fun.

Everything you say and do should be consistent with the six core ethical values comprising good character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, caring, fairness and citizenship. This Volunteer Code of Ethics sets forth expectations of 4-H volunteers:

1. Act to encourage and justify trust. Teach 4-H members the meaning and importance of trustworthiness.
2. Treat members, parents, volunteers, Extension staff, judges and others with respect, courtesy and consideration. Avoid and prevent put-downs, insults, name-calling, yelling and other verbal or non-verbal conduct likely to offend, hurt or set a bad example.
3. Be informed about youth and their positive development. Fulfill responsibilities by striving to improve performance as Extension staff, volunteer and mentor of youth. Attend training sessions, seek out and use research-based resources and educational materials.
4. Teach and model kindness and compassion for others. Recognize that all youth have skills and talents that can be used to help others and improve the community. Teach and demand teamwork and discourage selfishness.
5. Teach and model fair-mindedness; be open to ideas, suggestions, and opinions of others.
6. Make all reasonable efforts to ensure equal access to participation for all youth and adults, regardless of race, creed, color, sex, national origin or disability. Make all decisions fairly and treat all youth and adults with impartiality.
7. Teach and model the importance of obeying laws and rules as an obligation of citizenship and obey the laws of the locality, state and nation.
8. Promote the responsible treatment of animals and stewardship of the environment.
9. Not use alcohol or any illegal substance while working with or when responsible for youth. Do not be under the influence while working with or when responsible for youth. Do not allow youth to do so while under your supervision.
10. Not harming youth or adults in any way, whether through sexual harassment, physical force, verbal or mental abuse, neglect or other harmful behaviors.
11. Provide a safe environment for youth to learn.





4-H Name & Emblem Guidelines

The 4-H Name and Emblem are protected under federal statute Title 18, U.S. Code 707. This provides the 4-H Name and Emblem with the level of protection afforded other Federal marks, such as the Seal of the President of the United States. The 4-H Name and Emblem is intended to represent the ideals of the program with its focus on serving the educational needs and interests of 4-H youth. <https://4h.unl.edu/name-emblem-guidelines>

4-H Lore

Nebraska 4-H Mission Statement

4-H empowers youth to reach their full potential, working and learning in partnership with caring adults.

4-H Vision

A world in which youth and adults learn, grow and work together as catalysts for positive change.

4-H Educational Philosophy

The phrase “Learning by Doing” sums up the educational philosophy of the 4-H program. Young people learn best when they are involved in their learning.

4-H Pledge

The pledge tells what 4-H is about. The 4-H goal is the four-fold development of youth: Head, Heart, Hands and Health. The pledge was adopted by the delegates of the 1927 National 4-H Club Camp in Washington, D.C. State club leaders voted for and adopted the pledge for universal use. The phrase “and my world” was added in 1973. The saying of the pledge has a prominent place in 4-H activities, at regular 4-H meetings, achievement days and other club events.

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.

4-H Motto

The motto “To Make the Best Better” is intended to inspire young people to continue to learn and grow, to make their best efforts better through participating in educational experiences.

4-H Colors

The 4-H colors are green and white. Green, nature’s most prominent color, symbolizes growth. The white symbolizes purity and high ideals.

Getting Started

4-H clubs are the foundation of the 4-H program. A 4-H club is a group of two or more youth guided by one or more adult volunteer leaders. To become a Chartered 4-H Club, the club size includes 5 or more youth from three different families.

Before you start – decide:

- How many meetings (and when) to plan for the purpose of “learning.”
- How many meetings to have for “fun.”
- How many community service projects to complete.
- How to share individual interest.

Then, let the group select items to go in the program plan.

- Select months, dates and times that your plans should be carried out.
- Add dates of any special county, district and state events important to group members.

A 4-H club may concentrate on one project, like photography, or on several projects such as gardening, foods, woodworking or small animals. Members are encouraged to try a variety of projects and are not limited to their club’s activities. 4-H members build leadership by electing officers and conducting their own business meetings, working together on community service activities, meeting new friends, learning new skills and having lots of fun.

Who should come?

Begin by recruiting several interested, eligible youth to join the club. 4-H is designed to provide age appropriate opportunities for youth between the ages of 5 – 18. 4-H members, ages 5-7 considered Clover Kids. Ages 8 -18 are traditional members. 4-H eligibility is determined based on the youth’s 4-H age. (The age of the member on December 31st of **the previous year**). This can be puzzling especially during the months of October, November and December. Contact the county 4-H staff for clarification if needed.

4-H membership follows the non-discrimination policies of the University of Nebraska – Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture. All members should be treated equally and fairly. If you have questions about these policies, contact your local Extension office.

Nebraska Extension’s Equal Opportunity Policies

Nebraska Extension operates under the auspices of two equal opportunity policies:

- **The USDA Nondiscrimination policy: *The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, and marital or familial status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)*** Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotope, etc.) should contact the USDA Office of Communications at 202-720-5881 (voice) or 202-720-7909 (TDD). To file a complaint, write the Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. or call: 202-720-5881 (voice) or 202-720-7909 (TDD).
- **The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Nondiscrimination policy: *The University of Nebraska does not discriminate based on race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, marital status, and/or political affiliation in its programs, activities, or employment.***
- This policy is applicable to all University administered programs including educational programs, financial aid, admissions and employment procedures. The policy was enacted in accordance with the University of Nebraska Regent’s policy and with various federal and state laws

including Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Inquiries regarding discrimination issues may be directed to the Equity, Access & Diversity Office (EAD), 127 Administration Bldg., or 402-472-3417. Individuals may also contact other entities such as the Nebraska Equal Opportunity Commission and the Department of Education, Civil Rights Division.

UNL's EAD office has approved the use of the following statement on UNL 4-H publications and program announcements:

The 4-H Youth Development program abides with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.

Select a Location

4-H clubs can be organized within neighborhoods, through schools, churches and community centers or among youth with a similar project interest. Decide where to hold your first meeting. It might be in the home of one of the prospective members or in a public facility, like a school, church or community hall. Some groups like to meet in members' homes. This can give each member a chance to host a meeting and provides an opportunity for parental involvement. Large groups may feel there isn't enough space in family homes for all the activities they want to carry out and may choose public meeting facilities instead.

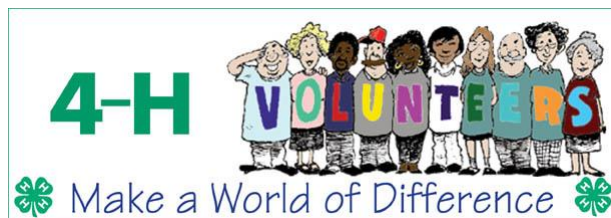
Recruit volunteers

Recruit volunteer helpers from families and other qualified adults. Some may be willing to serve as project or activity leaders while others may be willing to provide other special help. Ask them if they know of others, such as teens, grandparents or adults without children, who would be helpful and would enjoy working with 4-H youth. Keep in mind, the State 4-H office has informed us that everyone who is in anyway involved with youth and 4-H must complete a volunteer screening. This includes all 4-H club leaders - organizational and project, including family clubs and home school clubs. If a screened volunteer is not present at a 4-H meeting or event, the club cannot meet.

To enroll as a volunteer in the Douglas-Sarpy 4-H program visit ne.4honline.com. Enrollment instructions can be found here: <https://4h.unl.edu/enroll>.

Volunteer Screening Process

All 4-H volunteers are screened through the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. After the volunteer enrolls, the Nebraska State 4-H office will send an email invitation to the volunteer. The email provides a link to the online volunteer screening application. The application should take less than 15 minutes to complete. When the screening application is submitted it is processed for verification. We generally have the verification back within 24-48 hours. Screening invitations expire after 30 days so please complete the process in a timely manner.



Get Families Involved

4-H is a family affair! This means that the families of your 4-H members should be an important part of your program. Parent/adult involvement is one of the keys to a successful 4-H club. It provides an ongoing base for club support and expands the potential for interesting and exciting club programs. Active families mean active members:

Favorable attitudes + parental/adult interests + active family cooperation = successful 4-H clubs.

Family participation in 4-H may yield the following benefits:

- Stronger families where both youth and adults participate with common interest.
- Stronger and broader 4-H programs.

Family involvement increases by:

- Involving youth and adults in club setting and planning.
- Becoming familiar with the interests and special talents of your members' families. Ask for advice in areas where they can contribute and use their ideas. Encourage them to present for one or more of your club meetings.
- Involving adult family members in something worthwhile. If they offer help, make a mental note of their offer and call within a few days with a specific task in mind.
- Keeping them informed. Help the adults understand the 4-H objectives. Phone, send notes, letters or emails directly to adult family members about the club program.
- Inviting them to club meetings. This is especially important if you don't meet in members' homes. Hold a club meeting for adult family members where 4-H members present the program using presentations, judging or exhibits.
- Telling families what is expected of their child and your role in the process. Show families you are interested in their child through phone calls, letters and discussions before and after club meetings.
- Recognizing both members and adults. Thank families for their support, both personally and in public and compliment them for their contributions.
- Maintain interest; arrange a special social event for adult family members.
- Encourage members to make their 4-H work a topic of family conversation.
- Solicit family involvement at the county fair and other activities and events where results of 4-H club membership are shown.

4-H is a **community** of **young people**
 **across America** who are learning
leadership, citizenship and
life skills.

What to Do At the First Meeting

The first meeting is where the youth will begin to form a real group. They will start to get acquainted with each other and with 4-H. Together you will need to:

- Get acquainted.
- Provide enrollment information to any youth not yet enrolled. To enroll in the Douglas-Sarpy 4-H program visit ne.4honline.com. Enrollment instructions can be found here: <https://4h.unl.edu/enroll>
- Choose projects and activities.
- Choose a club name if you still need to.
- Decide on meetings; where, when and how often.
- Recruit other volunteers.

Get Acquainted

The first meeting is especially important. Everyone needs to feel as comfortable as possible at the beginning of the meeting. Sometimes this can be accomplished with recreational activities. If people don't know each other, some kind of game might be appropriate. The following are a few possibilities for "ice breakers":

- Have each person make a name tag to wear unless everyone knows everyone else.
- Everyone sits in a circle. Starting at any spot, the first person begins with "Hi everybody, my name is Jane Brown." The person to Jane's right says, "Hi Jane Brown, I'm Joe Smith." The next person says "Hi Jane Brown and Joe Smith, I'm...." and so on it goes. If everyone in the group knows everyone else, substitute another ice breaker. Perhaps tell something about herself/himself that nobody else knows.
- Autographs (for larger groups) – Armed with a small card and pencil, each member obtains the autographs of three people they do not already know and with whom they have three things in common. These common characteristics may be the same color of eyes, same shoe size, same age, etc.

Start the meeting after the group has had a chance to relax and get acquainted.

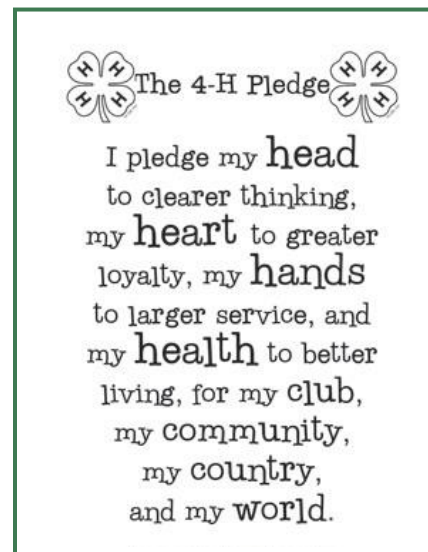
Welcome Everyone

Welcome everyone and explain what will be done at the meeting.

Explain 4-H

Explain that a 4-H member:

- Enrolls in one or more projects.
- Learns the 4-H Pledge.
- Participates in group meetings.
- Works at home between meetings.
- Needs support and encouragement from caring adults.
- May participate in 4-H events; competitions, county and state fair.
- Has fun.



Talk About Curriculum



The Nebraska 4-H curriculum catalog is called Pick Your Project is available at this link <https://4hcurriculum.unl.edu/index.php/main/index>. This is an online project selection guide for finding both county-only and state fair eligible 4-H fair projects and their resources. Users can search by keywords or browse by curriculum area, knowledge level, and geographic level.

Some 4-H curriculum is available for purchase at the Extension office, you can also purchase curriculum online. The national 4-H curriculum website is <https://shop4h.org/collections/curriculum>, the Nebraska 4-H curriculum website is <https://marketplace.unl.edu/ne4h/curriculum>,

County and State Fair Projects

4-H members in the Douglas-Sarpy program all exhibit at the Sarpy County Fair. The county fair is scheduled each year to occur over the first weekend of August. Projects that move forward to the Nebraska State Fair are selected by the county fair judges.

Specific fair projects are listed in the fair book. It is located on our website www.douglas-sarpy.unl.edu, click on 4-H and then the section titled County and State Fairs. New clubs will find it much easier to manage those first few meetings if they limit their members to one or two projects. In the future, members will probably want to expand into more areas.

Douglas-Sarpy 4-H Website

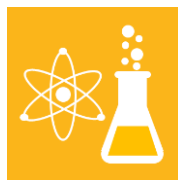
Our local website, www.douglas-sarpy.unl.edu, is an important resource for all members and volunteers to refer to throughout the year to keep informed of 4-H information and opportunities.



Resources



Join 4-H



School
Enrichment



Events



Animal
Science



County &
State Fairs

Selecting a Club Name

Each 4-H club is a unique group of individuals working together toward common goals. A club name can reflect the purpose(s) of the club, might relate to the club members' project(s) or the geographic area where members live or the club meets.

As a part of University of Nebraska Extension, publicly funded by county, state and federal governments, 4-H does not discriminate against minority groups. Therefore, **be sure** the club name you select is not biased for or against people in any minority groups. Avoid gender-specific names. It is easy to overlook embarrassing implications some club names might accidentally exhibit.

Creative or cute names for a 4-H club are fine; however, consider whether any potential club members might shy away from joining the club because of a misleading name. Consider the longevity of the name – will it still be appealing to its members in 2, 5 or 10 years from now? To

maintain a positive image for the entire 4-H program, club names should neither shock nor confuse the public.

Plan Meetings

As a group, discuss the most appropriate time and place for meetings. Decide when to hold the next meeting at this time. At the close of the meeting have an informal discussion with the adults and discuss what they hope their children will gain from 4-H. Emphasize 4-H's "Learn by Doing" slogan which reinforces that youth should be conducting meetings which they help to organize (age appropriate responsibilities) and doing their own project work. Also point out that young people need support, encouragement and help from their families.

Enrollment

To enroll in the Douglas-Sarpy 4-H program visit ne.4honline.com. Enrollment instructions here: <https://4h.unl.edu/enroll> Members and volunteer leaders need to enroll each year. The 4-H year runs from October 1 through September 30. Enrollments must be received by June 15 to exhibit at the county and state fairs. Enrollment is encouraged in the fall so your club members can take advantage of all the opportunities available to them throughout the 4-H year. Member and volunteer leader enrollment information is found on our website under "Join 4-H" or at the Extension office. There is no membership fee to be a 4-H volunteer. The yearly membership fee for youth is \$10. Membership in 4-H makes the youth eligible for fair entries, and contests. In addition, it protects the member with a limited insurance policy in case of an accident while participating in a 4-H activity.

4-H Enrollment and Entry Policy

4-H deadlines are an important element of the Youth Development Program as it increases the awareness of a vital life skill. The Douglas-Sarpy 4-H Council recommended and approved that all deadlines for 4-H memberships, animal exhibit entries and contest entries would be strictly adhered to. That being said, we understand that a hardship clause is necessary. In such a case, we ask that the 4-H family bring their situation to the 4-H staff who will serve as a liaison to the 4-H Council for a decision to be rendered.

The 4-H year runs from October 1 through September 30. While 4-H membership is available throughout the year, youth wishing to participate in 4-H contests must be enrolled as a 4-H member prior to the contest and the June 15 membership enrollment deadline. Youth wishing to exhibit at the Sarpy County Fair and the Nebraska State fair must be enrolled by June 15. Youth who have missed the 4-H membership deadline to exhibit at the Sarpy County Fair have the option to show static exhibits in the Open Class Building if they reside in Sarpy County. Douglas County residents can exhibit in the Douglas County Fair Open class. Open class entries are not a part of the 4-H judging process and cannot be selected to exhibit in the Nebraska State Fair 4-H Exhibit Hall.

It is essential for 4-H Staff, 4-H Council and 4-H families to work toward a program that employs real life situations as an opportunity to enhance positive youth development. As we work together, we can assist youth in developing knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable them to become productive and contributing members of society.

Complete 4-H Activity Permission and Health History Cards

In an effort to provide our leaders with important club member information, the Douglas-Sarpy 4-H staff is making available an Activity Permission and Health History card. This information is vital for all leaders **to keep with them** during any meeting or any 4-H activity. It includes emergency contact information, health conditions and doctor's name. It also gives parent/guardian permission to participate in or have transportation provided for club activities.

While we do not promote the transportation of 4-H youth, if transportation is provided, those drivers must bring their driver's license to the 4-H staff to be copied and put in their file. Drivers should have the cards of any youth riding with them. The cards are **mandatory** for all leaders to have for their club members and are available at both Extension Office locations.

After the First Meeting

- If you have not already done so, contact the 4-H staff with your club name. This will be entered into the 4HOnline website so you and your members can choose it upon enrollment.
- Keep your leader information and other material on hand for future reference.



The Second Meeting

Before holding a second meeting, make a plan.

- To include a recreational activity and/or refreshments.
- To elect **or** appoint 4-H club officers. (Not for Clover Kids) Most 4-H clubs have some type of business meeting that the officers are in charge of. The ages of the club members will determine how the club officers are selected. Having club officers develops strong leadership skills. The 4-H staff strongly recommends for clubs to have officers and to utilize them in an age appropriate manner.
- 4-H club officers' responsibilities:

President – The president conducts the meetings. A good president helps everyone in the club work together. The president listens to ideas and judges when the group has agreed to an action, but does not dictate.

Vice President – The vice president is the president's assistant and presides at meetings when the president is absent. Usually the vice president announces the program which follows the business part of the meeting.

Secretary – The secretary keeps records of membership, club activities (minutes) and handles club correspondence.

Treasurer – The treasurer is responsible for handling the club's money and reporting the balance at each meeting.

Reporter - The club reporter is responsible for letting others know what the members of your club are doing. The stories you write and pictures you collect will keep your community updated about the important things your 4-H club is doing.

Officer information handbooks and club resources are available from this site:

<https://4h.unl.edu/clubresources>

To make sure this is not a popularity contest, list the offices on a poster or chalkboard. Review the responsibilities and give each member a one page officer application form.

Sample:

I, _____ wish to apply for
_____ or _____ club
office. My qualifications are _____

I promise to meet all responsibilities of this office.

Signed _____ Date _____

- Discuss the proposed program.
- Talk about some special activities in which the group might want to participate.
- Decide on group goals and community service possibilities. If members are young and inexperienced, adults can take notes on these goals and plans.
- Review project manuals with members. Perhaps they would like to share why they are interested in learning about those areas. If there are a variety of manuals, encourage the members to pass them around. This may inspire them to branch out into areas they are not as familiar with.
- A Club Charter is required for clubs with five members from three different families. Complete and submit the Club Charter form found at: <https://4h.unl.edu/clubs/start>.
- 4-H Clubs must function formally through a constitution and by-laws. These are organizing documents of a club and describe how the club operates. A current copy of the club Constitution and Bylaws must be kept on file in the county Extension office. Download the 4-H Club Constitution and Bylaws from this link <https://4h.unl.edu/clubs/start> and submit it to the Extension office.

Will you be collecting any additional club dues or planning any fundraising?

Club Finances

Any 4-H club that chooses to have a club treasury or collect money for any reason **must** open a club checking account with two account signers and be issued an EIN number. This is a valuable asset for clubs who do fundraising as it enables donors to claim donations to clubs, and needs be completed before collecting funds.

4-H Clubs receive federal income tax exemption through a group exemption held by the [Nebraska 4-H Foundation](#). This means that 4-H clubs are exempt from paying federal income tax on funds raised on behalf of 4 H, or to support educational programs; and donors can deduct contributions to 4-H clubs. This does not exempt your club from paying sales tax.

For a club to be included in the group exemption, it must meet these requirements:

1. Be a chartered Nebraska 4-H Club (refer to above information)
2. Have a constitution/bylaws (refer to above information)
3. Have an IRS-issued Employer Identification Number. If a club handles finances, it must have its own EIN. (Available from link listed above).
4. Complete a Group Exemption Authorization Form. (Available from link listed above).

To retain this status, clubs must annually:

1. Submit a year-end financial report to the Extension office by **January 31**. **The Extension office will file an IRS Form 990-N by May 15 on behalf of your club.**
2. Maintain active status as a Nebraska 4-H club, which means having at least 5 members from at least 3 families enrolled in the club.
3. Clubs will be excluded from exemption if failure to comply with the above.

Access to additional information and the proper forms can be found at this link:

<http://4h.unl.edu/clubs/irs-tax-exemption>

Successful Meetings/Experiences

Planning Effective 4-H Club Meetings

Your 4-H meetings affect the experiences youth will have in 4-H. Because this is especially true for the beginning members, successful 4-H meetings are important. As members, 4-H youth want to be active and learn. As a leader, you can help to make meetings both enjoyable and educational. Include activities the members feel are important to them and involve the group in planning meetings. As a result you'll have 4-H meetings that are both fun and full of learning experiences for youth.

Well planned meetings give youth an opportunity to:

- Make new friends.
- Share ideas.
- Acquire new knowledge.
- Enjoy recreational activities.
- Develop self confidence and leadership.
- Participate in decision making.
- Work cooperatively.
- For a large variety of club activities that are easy to plan, see this site:
<https://4h.unl.edu/resources/club-leaders#teaching>.

How Often to Meet

A club can't accomplish its goals if it meets infrequently. Clubs are encouraged to meet beginning in October and throughout the year except for holidays or around fair time. Many clubs enjoy an end of the season meeting after the State Fair. All clubs should try to meet at least once a month. Choose what works best for you and other club members. If you choose monthly meetings as you are getting started, you can always add additional meetings or special activities as you progress throughout the 4-H year. Club meeting times can vary. Some clubs plan special project work sessions, special activities or community service days separate from their regular meetings.

Where

Most often, members' homes, schools or public facilities are available and provide a good place for meetings. Sometimes an outdoor setting may be appropriate. If the facility requests 4-H Club Liability Insurance information, that is available through the University of Nebraska – Lincoln. Please contact the 4-H staff to receive it.

Planning Your Meeting

Every meeting needs to have a purpose and a specific learning activity to help members reach their goals. Meetings also need to provide fun and fellowship. For club members age 8 and older, work with the club officers to plan the meeting. While adult leaders should help insure the meeting has structure, they should avoid "running the whole show." Once the meeting is planned and the officers know their responsibilities, let the youth run the business meeting.

Remember this formula to plan meetings: 1/4 business, 1/2 education, 1/4 recreation. Mix it up with lots of variety to keep interest, encourage learning, and continue to make it fun. Keep the business section effective and to the point.

Sample Club Meeting Outline

Business: 15-20 minute

The business section should demonstrate democracy in action. Members learn how to express themselves in a group, listen to the views of others, come to consensus and reach a decision, and abide by majority rule.

Typical business agenda:

1. Call to order.
2. Pledge of Allegiance and 4-H Pledge
3. Roll call - answering in any way the group decides
4. Introduction of guests.
5. Minutes of the previous meeting, approval of minutes and correspondence – read by secretary.
6. Officers' report (especially the treasurer's report if there is a club account)
7. Committee report
7. Review old business.
8. Discuss new business.
9. Adjournment

For additional information on parliamentary procedure, club activities and more see this site:

<https://4h.unl.edu/resources/club-leaders#officer>

Education and project work: 30-45 minutes

"Learning by doing" is one of the 4-H program's unique strengths. This is the place for members to give demonstrations, work on projects, participate in tours, community service and other activities. Use a variety of activities to involve members in program planning, self-esteem development, and decision making. Ingenuity and creativity can make this section of the meeting interesting and active. Providing work space during project work makes learning easier.

Recreation and social activities: 15-25 minutes

A variety of fun activities add enthusiasm and enjoyment to the meetings. Some clubs have a different recreation committee for each meeting, while others elect recreation officers for the year. A few ideas are: games, charades, relays, sports, puzzles, party for parents, picnics, and hikes. Refreshments can be a part of recreation, with different members responsible throughout the year.



Clover Kids

4-H members ages 5-7 are considered Clover Kids. These youth develop talents and self-esteem in a setting that is educationally age appropriate and fun. Many clubs incorporate a variety of ages together for an enriching, mentoring experience. Other clubs prefer to keep their Clover Kids with children in this age group. Clover Kids can participate in the county fair. They are not restricted to the guidelines of the fairbook and may enter any age appropriate static exhibits, animal exhibits and participate in contests. Clover kids are not "judged" by the same standards as the older members. They do receive special Clover Kids ribbons but no premium money is awarded for this age group.

For a large variety of Clover Kid activities see this site: <http://child.unl.edu/cloverkid>. Additional Clover Kid curriculum is available for purchase at the previously mentioned websites.

For Clover Kids and young 4-H'ers, utilizing the club members' parents is especially helpful. Perhaps asking each parent to present a particular area (food and nutrition, physical fitness etc.) would be a way to get everyone involved and give the 4-H'ers a wide variety of project ideas. Keep the meetings age, time and project appropriate.

Community Service Projects

An important activity for 4-H members is taking part in community service projects. These projects provide a great opportunity for 4-H members to develop positive relationships in the community as well as enhance personal growth and satisfaction.

Plan for Successful Community Service Projects

Steps to help make community service projects successful and fun:

1. Decide what is needed in the community/county.
2. Decide what types of activities members have interest in and abilities to do.
3. List all the activities that have been suggested.
4. Discuss the possibilities and rank them in order of importance and interest. Select the project.
5. Develop a plan of action.
6. Carry out the project as planned.
7. Record the members' efforts with photos, videotapes, or written notes.
8. Monitor the activities and make adjustments as needed. Take time to discuss the successes and shortcomings of the project and ideas for improvement.
9. Write a summary of the experience after completion. Share it with the county 4-H staff. Consider putting together a scrapbook record of the activity.
10. Celebrate! Feel good about the contribution to the community and the positive learning gained by the 4-H members.

DO encourage members to get involved in all phases of the project including planning, conducting, and evaluating the project. **DON'T** do it all for them.

Source: Diem, K. G. Revised 2001. New Jersey 4-H leader Training Series- 10 Steps Toward Performing a Successful Community Service Project .Rutgers Cooperative Extension.

Recognizing Youth Efforts and Accomplishments

The purpose of recognition is to encourage and support the efforts of young people in learning to improve their knowledge and develop their life skills. Recognition should reward positive learning behaviors in youth.

National 4-H Recognition Model

The National 4-H Recognition Model includes five types of recognition. It is important for adults who work with 4-H'ers to provide appropriate recognition to all participants.

- Recognition of 4-H'ers for **participation** in educational experiences acknowledges involvement as a first step in building a positive self concept.
- Recognition of **progress toward personal goals** enables youth to gain experience in goal- setting and realistic self-assessment.
- Recognition of the **achievement of generally recognized standards of excellence** gives youth an external, pre-determined target for their learning experiences.
- Recognition through **peer competition** is a strong motivation for some but not all young people. It is not appropriate for youth under age eight.
- Recognition for **cooperation** helps youth learn and work cooperatively, preparing them for living in today's inter-dependent, global society.



Nebraska 4-H Diamond Clover Program

The Nebraska 4-H Diamond Clover Program encourages 4-H youth to engage in a variety of projects and activities that will enable members to acquire the life skills necessary to lead successful lives as competent, caring and contributing citizens. The program's overall goal is to provide 4-H members a rich and diverse learning experience. The Nebraska 4-H Diamond Clover Program is designed for all 4-H members ages 8 and older. The program consists of six levels that require a 4-H member to plan and report a broad range of age-appropriate accomplishments. The program is designed to enable every 4-H member willing to exert the effort an opportunity to be recognized, regardless of how they are involved in 4-H. Learn more about the Nebraska Diamond Clover Program at this link: <http://4h.unl.edu/diamondclover>.

Achievement Applications

Nebraska 4-H is excited to announce the new Achievement Application form that will be used as an alternative to the Career Portfolio <https://4h.unl.edu/annual-achievement-application>. The Achievement Application will be used at the state level to select winners for 4-H Congress, Conference, scholarships, and other leadership opportunities that arise statewide. It will also be used for awards in the county. By having one single form that more closely resembles the kinds of questions being asked on college applications and in resumes, 4-H'ers will be better prepared to be college and job ready while keeping a record of their achievements.

Recognizing Club Efforts and Accomplishments

Nebraska 4-H Club of Excellence

The overall goal of 4-H clubs is to develop enthusiastic young people who boldly take action to demonstrate life skills as capable, caring, confident, competent kids of character thus contributing to the improvement of themselves, their family, their club, their community, and their world. One way clubs might choose to measure their success in meeting that goal is their ability to gain status as a Nebraska 4-H Club of Excellence. The application for the Nebraska Club of Excellence is available at this link <https://4h.unl.edu/awards-recognition>.

Recognizing Volunteer Efforts and Accomplishments

Nebraska 4-H Volunteers of Excellence

The Nebraska 4-H Volunteers of Excellence Program is designed to complement the tradition of recognizing outstanding volunteers, provide guidance for volunteers to expand their leadership ability, educational opportunities and accomplishments, and reward their dedication to the 4-H program. This program allows volunteers to personalize their experience and select various levels that fit their needs, ability, passion and time. Learn how you can apply for this well-deserved award at this link: <https://4h.unl.edu/excellenceprogram>



Thank You!

Your decision to serve as a 4-H Volunteer is sincerely appreciated. The 4-H Youth Development Program would not exist without your support.