



Knox County New 4-H Family Handbook

Welcome to 4-H! You have just inquired about one of the biggest youth development programs in the nation.

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 Knox County 4-H Newsletters. Your family will start receiving this free, monthly publication once we receive your active enrollment on 4-H Online.

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 experience can be tailor-made to fit your goals, schedule, and interests. That is one reason 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 don't 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. But, 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!

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

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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.

Plus, we have 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.



EXTENSION





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 or organizing the club's service project. 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 ages 5-7 (Clover Kid members) should always have a parent or guardian attend meetings with them.
- ▶ Guide your child as they select a 4-H project and help them develop goals that are challenging, but also realistic. Encourage their project work by making it a family learning experience.
- ▶ If your child serves in a leadership role within the club, help him/her fulfill the duties of the office.
- ▶ Read the Knox County 4-H Newsletter, so you will know the details of upcoming special events, dates & deadlines. You will automatically start receiving this publication when you or your child enrolls in 4-H. It can also be found on our website.
- ▶ Visit the county 4-H website for the latest information and resources at: knox.unl.edu.
- ▶ The 4-H staff will provide countywide trainings, project workshops, and other core 4-H learning experiences. Try to participate in these classes and workshops. By understanding more about the various 4-H programs, you can help your child excel and take advantage of all that 4-H has to offer.





4-H Frequently Asked Questions



What is 4-H age? 4-H is open to all youth between the ages 5 and 18 (4-H Age), regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, and marital or family status as determined by the following age criteria. 4-H eligibility is determined based on the 4-H age. (The age of the member on December 31st of the previous year.) The first year of eligibility for participation in the 4-H Clover Kids program is the 4-H age of five (5). The last year of eligibility for participation in the 4-H Clover Kids program is the 4-H age of seven (7). The first year of eligibility for the regular 4-H program is the 4-H age of eight (8). The last year of eligibility is 4-H age of eighteen (18).

What do the four “H’s” stand for on the 4-H clover emblem? The “H’s” stand for: head, heart, hands, and health. 4-H members pledge their *Head, Heart, Hands, and Health* (the four H’s) as they recite the 4-H pledge.

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 changed 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 100th 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 CHILDREN** whether they live on a farm or in town.

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 five (4-H age) and they can stay involved until their final year of eligibility—the year they are 18 (4-H age).

What is the 4-H year timeline? The 4-H year runs from October 1 to September 30.





4-H Frequently Asked Questions



Can we join 4-H at any time during the year? Yes, however, we encourage youth to enroll by April 15th to insure they receive important 4-H information in a timely manner. All youth must be enrolled with the Nebraska Extension Office in Knox County by June 15 or before participating in any competitive 4-H events that year and dues paid to the Knox County 4-H Council to exhibit at Knox County Fair. Competitive events include all Pre-Fair Contests and Shooting Sports Contests.

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. On the other hand, there are benefits of younger youth learning from the knowledge and example of older youth as well as the leadership opportunities for older youth.

What is a Clover Kid? Children ages 5 to 7 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 can be detrimental, Clover Kid members are not allowed to participate in competitive events. These members can participate in many contests and will receive clover kid ribbons. Their work is not "judged" and compared to other children's work. For more information refer to the Clover Kids in Knox County Handbook.

What does it cost to join a 4-H club? 4-H Member dues are **\$5.00** per 4-H'er and **no cost** per Clover Kid and are due by June 15 to your club leader or the extension office (make checks payable to the Knox County 4-H Council). Dues are used for member insurance and to support county 4-H activities. If you are planning to exhibit livestock there are additional fees for ear tags, quality assurance training and DNA samples if you plan on showing at the State Fair. Depending on your 4-H projects, the cost will vary from family to family.

How do I stay informed about 4-H opportunities? Read the Knox County 4-H Newsletter. It will give you all the details about upcoming programs and events. Also, visit the Knox County 4-H website at: <https://extension.unl.edu/statewide/knox/>. You can also "like" us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/KnoxCountyNebraskaExtension/>.

Want to learn more? Check out the **4-H Policy and Procedures Handbook** online at <https://4h.unl.edu/policy-handbook>.





One of the **1st things** you will need to do is create an account in 4-H Online and enroll your child or children as 4-H members.

Go to: <https://v2.4honline.com>

- ▶ Click **Don't have an account?** At the bottom of the page
- ▶ Select the **State** you will be participating in 4-H and click on **Nebraska 4-H Youth Development**
- ▶ Select the **County** you will be participating in 4-H
- ▶ The email will be your **Username**. Use an email account that is active and that you check frequently to receive 4-H updates.
- ▶ Fill in your **Family Name and Mobile Phone Number**
- ▶ Create a **Password** and write it down! You will need the password to log into your account in the future.
- ▶ Click **Create Account**

Fill out and Verify your **family's information** and for every 4-H'er (child) that will be participating in 4-H.

Visit <https://extension.unl.edu/statewide/knox/youth-enrollment-information/> for more detailed instructions.





Join a 4-H Club



You may want to **JOIN** a 4-H Club. To begin select a 4-H club in your area. We have provided a list below of the Knox County 4-H Clubs and Leaders. Please contact one of these clubs to start your 4-H experience. If you need further assistance contacting the leaders, please call the Knox County Extension Office at 402-288-5611.

<u>Club</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Leader</u>
Alcott Lads & Lassies	Creighton	Adele Rader or Megan Hanefeldt
Knox County Knockouts	Bloomfield	Kurt & Hally Ziegler
Knox County Shooting Sports	Bloomfield	Kevin Millikan
Lucky Lads & Lassies	Verdigre	Dana Konopasek
Lucky Livewires	Crofton	Crystal Steffen
Northwest Feeders	Bloomfield	Julie Dather
Running Water	Niobrara	Jessica Nielsen or Tabatha Nielsen
SE Wranglers	Wausa	Derek & Renae Cunningham
Sparta Sparklers	Verdigre	Cassie Sonder, Paige Randa or Kelsey Metties

We are always Welcoming New Clubs!

As per state 4-H guidelines, 4-H clubs **MUST HAVE** at least **three families** and **five youth** enrolled to count as a Club. If you would like to start your own 4-H club, please contact the Extension Office.





4-H Projects

Projects provide the basis of the 4-H program by offering various educational experiences. Carrying out a project will help the member “learn by doing” as well as learn “why” things happen the way they do.

Why Projects?

The project is a teaching tool that can be used to develop many desirable traits in addition to the more evident project skills. Project work is a means to an end, not the end itself. The development of the individual is the most important part.

What is a project?

Projects are real life experiences that help 4-H members learn to make sound decisions. Projects put the hands and mind to work.

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 their 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 4-H years. 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. 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 better to complete fewer projects that reflect quality workmanship than to do a “rush job” and complete a lot of poorer quality projects.

What are the objectives of 4-H projects?

- Create a sense of ownership
- Give a feeling of achievement
- Strengthen family and community ties
- Provide members the opportunities to: learn project skills; develop and understand project knowledge; develop good attitudes; assume responsibility; provide healthful competition; make meaningful decisions
- Explore career opportunities and thus the need for continued education. All projects are, in a sense, career explorative-giving each member a taste of the work and responsibilities involved.

Project selection is optional for Nebraska 4-H members, with the exception of horse and shooting sports projects. However, youth are encourage to officially enroll in projects they are interested in. The project enrollment process may help you learn valuable management skills like goal-setting, record-keeping, planning, and organizing.



4-H Projects Continued...



What is a 4-H project manual? To help guide your learning experience, 4-H offers project manuals. These written manuals provide age-appropriate, hands-on lessons to help youth acquire new skills and knowledge. These manuals are research-based through Universities nationwide.

Please keep in mind that you are not required to utilize a project manual to guide your child's 4-H project, but you may find it very helpful. Also, do not feel like you have to complete every learning activity listed in the project manual. Think of the project manual as a very useful resource for you, rather than a "to do" list of activities that must be completed.

4-H Curriculum may be ordered direct and shipped to you. Visit <https://extension.unl.edu/statewide/knox/4-h-curriculum/> for ordering direct.

How can we learn about new projects? During the spring and summer months, there will be workshops and educational opportunities offered for 4-H'ers to learn about different projects and sometimes leave with a project they can exhibit at the fair. Some workshops will require a small registration fee to cover the cost of materials supplied for the 4-Hers. Refer to the 4-H newsletter, website and/or Facebook page for information as it becomes available.





The County Fair



One of the **highlights** of the year for 4-H members is being able to exhibit their completed projects at the County Fair, and then hopefully to have their static exhibits selected for State Fair Competition!

When is the fair? The Knox County Fair is usually the first part of August. As part of the fair, members have an opportunity to compete in a variety of large and small animal shows, as well as enter completed projects in the static exhibit building.

Who can enter the fair? Any enrolled 4-H member, who has enrolled and paid membership dues by the deadline, can participate in the fair. Fairbooks are available every year that lists 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 fairbooks to get ideas for projects to enter in the fair.

How do we enter exhibits in the fair?

Static Exhibits (Non-Livestock):

-Fashion Show, Shooting Sports, and Pre-Entry Static Entry Forms: These forms will be mailed to you and are due into the office in July. Please refer to the 4-H Calendar and monthly newsletters regarding the specific date for each form.

Livestock Exhibits: It is your responsibility to properly ID your animals by the deadline. Check the Animal Identification Guidelines Sheet for dates and forms that need to be filled out. Please watch for additional information, such as Weigh Dates and Youth for the Quality Care of Animals Training (YQCA), in the monthly newsletters .

-Pre-Entry Livestock Fair Forms: These forms will be mailed to you and are due into the office in July. Please refer to the 4-H Calendar and monthly newsletters regarding the specific date each year.

How are exhibits judged?

Static Exhibits: Static exhibits are judged earning a purple, blue, red or white ribbon. You may sign up to interview judge one or more exhibits during check-in at the fair. Additional awards may also be awarded.

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

Clover Kid Exhibits: All entries are non-competitive and each entry receives a Clover Kid ribbon. There will be the opportunity for exhibits to be interview judged during check-in at the fair.

Premiums for Exhibits: Youth receive cash premiums based upon the color of ribbon earned. 4-H members will receive their premium check by mail a few weeks after fair.

What do the 4-H ribbon colors mean? Purple ribbons designate an exhibit of superior quality that has met and exceeded all of the standards. Blue ribbons denote an above average exhibit that has met almost all of the standards in a way that surpasses the norm. Red ribbons indicate average quality and indicate that the exhibit has met the majority of standards in such a way that the benchmark was reached, but not exceeded. White ribbons indicate that the exhibit has not met the majority of the standards.

When are exhibits released? Release times will be posted in the fair schedule in the front of the fairbook. Early release is not allowed.



Additional Opportunities for 4-H Members



Knox County 4-H offers many different contests and workshops 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. You can find the complete details in the fairbook or newsletters.

4-H Communication Event:

- **Prepared Speech** - provides youth the opportunity to write and prepare a speech on a topic related to their 4-H experience. The judge will view the speech and evaluate based on the subject, organization, and delivery of the speech.
- **Radio Public Service Announcement (PSA)** - contest challenges youth to write and record a 60-second promotional audio recording focused on a yearly theme that could be played on the radio to promote the work of Nebraska 4-H. Youth are judged on their overall organization and delivery of the PSA.
- **4-H Impromptu Speech** – The Impromptu Speech competition gives youth the opportunity to write and present a speech around a 4-H related topic that they select during the competition where they are given 15 minutes to develop and prepare their presentation. The Judge will evaluate the subject, organization, and delivery of the speech.
- **Video Communication** – A video communication contest allows youth to create a multi-media video around a theme related to 4-H. The Judge will be evaluating both the organization of information as well as the audio and video production.
- **4-H Illustrated Presentations** - is a live presentation with a formal talk where youth will use visual aids (such as props, posters, computer-based visuals, handouts, video, etc.) to show and tell others how to do something. The judge views the entire presentation and engages in a question-and-answer session following the presentation.

Fashion Show - Individual entry only. Youth can sew and/or purchase a garment and model it for the judges. Judging includes clothing construction; modeling, fit, confidence and poise; and how well they respond in an interview process. All participants model their garments for the audience during the 4-H Fashion Show.

Talent Contest - Individual or group entry. Each contestant will perform during the Talent Contest. Refer to the 4-H newsletter, fairbook or 4-H Calendar for details.

Food Revue - Individual Table Setting Entry. Youth put together a menu, make one food item pair it all together with a theme; holiday, birthday, anniversary, season, family dinner, etc. Plan the table service needed to serve the food. Include dishes, silver, table linen, and centerpiece. Please refer to the fairbook for more information.

Clover Kid Camp - Clover Kid Camp involves youth in a one-day camp-like setting where educational, hands-on activities occur. Refer to the 4-H newsletter, fairbook or 4-H Calendar for details.





Additional Opportunities for 4-H Members Continued...



Project Day and Other Specialty Workshops - Youth will have an opportunity to learn more about other 4-H projects with these instructor-led workshops. Each year a variety of projects are offered in different areas. In most workshops 4-H'ers will leave with a project to exhibit at the fair. Refer to the 4-H newsletter, fairbook or 4-H Calendar for details.

Shooting Sports Competition - Individual entry only. Youth must attend 2 practices with a certified 4-H Shooting Sports Leader to participate. Refer to the 4-H newsletter, fairbook or 4-H Calendar for details.

Do You Know Contest - Individual entry only. Youth will learn about issues related to family and consumer sciences through written questions and placing classes.

Horticulture Judging Contest - Individual entry only. The contest consists of 3 sections: identification of plants, a class to judge and rank, and a written exam.

Tractor Driving Contest - Individual entry only. For teens 14 or 15 years of age who will work on a farm. Anyone older than 15 is also welcome to attend, but those under age 14 are not eligible to take the class. Extensive training on tractor and ATV safety occurs during in-class lessons with hands-on activities.

Livestock Judging Contest - Individual entry only. Youth learn to judge livestock (sheep, swine, horse, goat, and beef). The state contest gives youth the opportunity to provide oral reasons for their placement.

Annual Achievement Application - The Nebraska 4-H Achievement Application is a standard application form used for the selection of county and state award winners, including Nebraska delegates to [National 4-H Congress](#) and [National 4-H Conference](#), as well as Nebraska 4-H Foundation scholarship award recipients. Visit <https://4h.unl.edu/achievement-application> for additional information.

Diamond Clover Program - Individual entry only. This program consists of six levels that require a 4-H member to plan and report a broad range of age-appropriate accomplishments. The program's overall goal is to provide 4-H members a rich and diverse learning experience.

Camp Scholarships - Deadlines vary so please read the Knox County 4-H Newsletter.

College Scholarships - Deadlines vary so please read the Knox County 4-H Newsletter.

Next Chapter - A college-readiness program delivered through the Nebraska 4-H Program that helps 8th grade students prepare for and succeed in college by providing the skills students need to reach their academic goals.

Nebraska 4-H Camps & Centers - These camps provide unique educational opportunities that empower people of all ages to be active in the pursuit of self-improvement in a safe, inclusive, and fun environment.





New 4-H Member Checklist



To help you have a **Successful** first year in 4-H,
please follow this checklist:

- Choose a 4-H club and contact the leader
- Enroll online at v2.4honline.com
- Choose 4-H projects
- Choose 4-H manuals and/or resources
- ID animals by the deadline, if applicable
- Attend 4-H meetings regularly
- Ensure parent involvement in the 4-H club
- Work on 4-H projects and take advantage of county workshops
- Read the Knox County 4-H Newsletter
- Visit the 4-H website and Facebook page frequently



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