

4-H Youth Development



What Is 4-H?

4-H is a voluntary, informal education program for boys and girls who are ages 9-19 by September 30 of the current year. 4-H is open to everyone regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. Additionally, 4-H Cloverbuds is a program for youth ages 5-8 by September of the current year.

Isn't 4-H just for children who live on a farm?

No! 4-H is for all youth regardless of where they live. 4-H serves youth from all backgrounds and interests. Today in Virginia, 4H members are from urban and rural areas. They participate in projects addressing life skills and other important issues, as well as agriculture-related areas.

What do the H's stand for?

Head, Heart, Hands and Health. 4-H members 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 are the 4-H emblem and other symbols?

A green four-leaf clover with a white "H" on each cloverleaf is the 4-H emblem. The official emblem is copyrighted and may be used only as approved by 4-H. Green and white are the colors. The 4-H motto is "To Make the Best Better." The 4-H slogan is "Learn by Doing."

Who conducts 4-H?

The Virginia 4-H program is conducted by Virginia Cooperative Extension, supported by Virginia Tech and Virginia State Universities. County and State programs are directed by Extension staff who train and support volunteers to work with 4-H members.

Who funds 4-H?

Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) receives funding from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the State of Virginia and local governments. A variety of private donors also fund 4-H programs. Unit offices are located in every county/city of Virginia. Unit Extension Leadership Councils comprised of local residents, serve in an advisory capacity to the Extension staff to coordinate, organize, and plan programming in the unit. There is a 4-H Leadership Council in many counties/cities that give direction/guidance to local 4-H programming.

What does it cost to join?

4-H has no state or national membership registration fee. Uniforms are not required. There may be minimal costs for project materials, project manuals or some 4-H activities or events.

4-H MEMBERS

Why do young people like 4-H?

4-H gives kids a chance to learn *NEW* things, develop *NEW* skills, travel to *NEW* places, experience *NEW* situations, make *NEW* friends, and most importantly, have lots of *FUN*.

How do you join?

Call the Shenandoah County Extension Office at (540) 459-6140 to learn about current clubs.

4-H CLUBS



What is a club?

A club is a group of five or more young people, ages 5 to 8 or 9 to 19, led by trained adult leaders. Clubs meet for at least six 1-hour sessions during the year and have a planned program. Members elect officers and each member takes one or more projects. A club may explore a single subject or several project areas. 4-H members build leadership by electing officers and conducting their own business; work together on community service activities; meet new friends; and most important, have lots of fun.

How often do clubs meet?

Most clubs meet once or twice a month. This depends on the group and what they want to do. Sometimes members may have to be enrolled in a project by a certain time to be eligible for certain activities such as local and district livestock and horse shows.

Where do 4-H clubs meet?

A 4-H club may be organized on a community or neighborhood basis and use local facilities (schools/churches) or members' homes. Any place that is large enough and provides a safe environment and is convenient for the members of the group is a good choice.

When do clubs meet and how long do meetings last?

This depends on the group. Many community clubs meet for an hour or two after school, in the evening, or on a weekend. The most important thing is to have a regular time to get together, one that members and their families can remember.

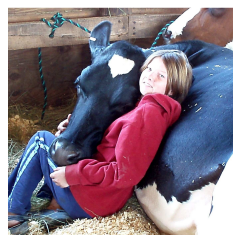
How big should a club be?

This depends on the age of the members, the place they have to meet, and the leadership available. The ideal club is big enough to have fun together, but small enough for everyone to feel a part of the group. The average 4-H club is 10 to 20 members.

Do local 4-H clubs have dues?

No. There is no cost to be a member of a 4-H club. If a club wants money for special activities, members usually conduct fundraisers. If a club does not want to do fundraising, members may need to pay for special activities.

4-H PROJECTS



What are 4-H projects?

4-H projects are challenging, but practical planned courses of study with learning experiences centered on a specific subject. 4H members will usually work on a project (subject area) for a year. Hands-on, learn-by-doing involvement is the most important aspect of a project.

What does a 4-H project cost?

It varies. Members are responsible for the cost of supplies for their projects. Some projects might use supplies from around the house while others might invest hundreds of dollars in their projects (e.g., horse). Parents need to discuss cost with members as they select a project. Project cost should be realistic to the family situation.

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

Yes, with help. Members are encouraged to select at least one project and complete one or more learning experiences related to the project during the year. 4-H is a "learn-by-doing" program. Leaders, teen leaders, and parents may tell or show a member how, but members are expected to learn to do things themselves.

Are projects done individually or as a group?

Both. It varies among projects and among clubs. Some projects are more fun done as a group. Others, like making a garment or growing a plant, will be done individually. Some clubs have several project leaders and do specific project work at club meetings while others rely on parents and others to help members individually.

What is a 4-H Presentation?

A 4-H Presentation is an opportunity that allows the 4-H member to combine knowledge and skills of a subject area with skills in public speaking. Presentations can be given in one of two forms: 1) demonstration - demonstrate how to make or do something; 2) public speaking - 4-H'ers can talk about a project/subject experience that has made an impact on them. Presentations are an integral part of the 4-H program.

4-H MEETINGS**What do 4-H clubs do at meetings?**

4-H clubs usually participate in four general kinds of activities during the meeting. They have a business meeting, special interest program, project work and recreation or social activities.

Do they do all those things at one meeting?

Sometimes. Clubs may have a little business to conduct, may work on their projects for awhile and then play a game or two. Sometimes the whole meeting is centered on one topic.

4-H VOLUNTEERS/LEADERS**What are 4-H leaders?**

Volunteer leaders are the backbone of the 4-H program. They are adults who work voluntarily with a group of 4-H members. Volunteers go through an application process before they are enrolled as leaders. Additionally, volunteers receive training in skills they will need to become successful 4-H volunteers.

Are there different kinds of leaders?

There are three general categories of local 4-H volunteers: organizational leaders, project leaders, and activity leaders. Organizational leaders guide the overall organization of the club, help it function smoothly and maintain communications among the member families and between the club and the Extension Office. Project leaders work with members enrolled in a specific project or project area, assisting them to plan and carry out experiences that will help them reach their learning goals in the project. Activity leaders work with members in planning and carrying out specific activities for the club as a whole.

Can the same person be a project and an organizational leader?

Sure, if they have the time and interest. Sometimes big clubs divide these jobs and have several project leaders to meet the interests that 4-H members have.

How many leaders should a 4-H club have?

That depends on the size of the club and the age of the members. At least two are required. The average club has 3 to 5 leaders.

Where would I learn how to be a 4-H leader?

The 4-H Extension Agent is your first point of contact. After completing the application process, you are enrolled as a volunteer, trained and placed on the 4-H leader mailing list. Orientation will be provided by Extension. Leaders are invited to special training meetings and provided with the materials needed to conduct a 4-H club. Be sure to ask for the name of an experienced leader near you, whom you can call if you have any questions.

4-H PARENTS

What is expected of parents?

Children need parental encouragement to get them started in 4-H and to keep them involved in the program in later years.

Parents can help by:

Sharing - Provide encouragement and take an interest in 4-H projects and activities. Listen, look, and offer suggestions, but avoid the temptation to "take over" and do things yourself. Children learn by their mistakes, as well as successes.

Preparing - Assist by helping children understand the value of doing projects, having duties in the club, and following through on responsibilities as expected by others.

Being there- Children gain more from 4-H by attending meetings regularly and getting involved in 4-H activities. Parents are welcome at meetings and are encouraged to stay and observe. Lend a hand whenever you can. However, remember that 4-H clubs are for kids.

Caring - Arrange to participate with your child when you can. Your presence shows that your child and what he/she is doing are very important.

4-H CAMP



There are four basic types of 4-H camps:

Residential 4-H Camps—programming events for youth ages 9 to 13 in which campers stay overnight (5 days, 4 nights).

Special Interest 4-H Camps—programming events focusing mainly on a specific project or theme area. There is a large variety of special interest 4-H camps available. Different age group requirements are offered for these camps.

Day 4-H Camps—programming events in which campers participate in learning activities throughout the day, but do not stay overnight.

Cloverbud 4-H Camps—programming events for youth 5-8 years of age. Youth must meet the minimum age of 5 between October 1 and September 30, and must not be older than the maximum age.

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