Welcome to 4-H

We're so glad that your child has joined 4-H. The 4-H program offers a variety of opportunities for young people. Beginning with 4-H Cloverbuds at age 5 through the teen years of middle and high school, your child can participate in projects, events, activities, competitions, workshops, and conferences. There is a lot that 4-H has to offer! This handbook will introduce you to many of those opportunities and can be your go-to guide when you need answers.

What is 4-H?

4-H makes learning fun! In 4-H clubs young people work with other youth and adult volunteers to learn new skills, practice leadership, give back to their community, and make new friends. They learn about topics that interest them through hands-on activities. We believe in learning by doing.

4-H members select one or more topics to learn about during the year. That includes everything from learning how to cook, build a robot, or care for the environment. These topics are referred to as members’ “projects.” Hundreds of projects are offered through 4-H so members can pick the ones that most interest them. Or they can find other young people with the same interest and study that topic with the help of a volunteer who shares that same interest.

Welcome to 4-H — New 4-H Member Guide helps new 4-H members sample a variety of 4-H projects. Members learn how to prepare simple snacks, create a windowsill garden,
What is Experiential Learning?

In 4-H, we practice learning by doing. In other words, young people learn through experience. During 4-H club meetings, members will participate in learning activities. But learning doesn’t stop with the activity. Young people think about what they did and what they learned — they reflect on the activity. Then they learn to apply what they have learned to life at home or school, with friends or family, and possibly for a future career.

What Else Will Young People Learn?

When young people participate in positive youth development programs like 4-H, they have the opportunity to learn what are described as the 5 C’s — Competence, Confidence, Character, Caring, and Connection. Following are examples of how young people may demonstrate the 5 C’s.

- Get along with others and make new friends
- Accept responsibility
- Respect and trust others
- Settle conflict with others
- Understand their strengths and weaknesses
- Clearly communicate thoughts and ideas
- Plan activities
- Set goals and make plans to reach them
- Work as a team player
- Demonstrate confidence
- Contribute to their community
- Help others in need
- Make healthier choices
- Develop life skills (see page 15 for more details)

As they grow and learn, all young people have four developmental needs. Those needs are

- **Belonging**: To know they are cared about by others
- **Independence**: To practice responsibility and make decisions
- **Generosity**: To practice helping others through their own generosity
- **Mastery**: To feel and believe they are capable and successful

4-H helps meet these needs by providing positive youth development experiences. In 4-H, youth build skills and values, and use their skills, talents, and time in ways that make them feel confident and competent.

You may hear 4-H staff and volunteers talking about BIG-M. That is an easy way to remember these important developmental needs — Belonging, Independence, Generosity, and Mastery. These are essential needs that every child has.

**BELONGING**

Young people want to belong and be members of groups or clubs. A sense of belonging may be the single most powerful positive influence 4-H adds to the lives of young people. Belonging is the "B" in BIG-M. Three elements create a strong feeling of belonging among club members.

A positive relationship with a caring adult is one of the most important ingredients of Positive Youth Development. Young people in clubs or groups are directly impacted by relationships with caring adults. A supportive relationship nurtures club members as they learn and helps them feel confident to try new things, tackle more difficult tasks, and set higher goals.

An inclusive environment acknowledges and celebrates the similarities and differences in club members. All members feel accepted and appreciated. In a welcoming environment, young people are more likely to participate and become engaged in learning activities.

A safe emotional and physical environment encourages positive interaction among members and teamwork.

**GENEROSITY**

Generosity is the third ingredient of Positive Youth Development and the "G" in BIG-M. Generosity values and practices service to others. 4-H members are encouraged to develop and practice skills that are helpful or useful in their community. 4-H community service projects allow youth and adults to work together to help others. Community service helps youth build discipline, learn respect, value civic responsibility, and participate in real-world experiences.

**MASTERY**

Mastery is the final ingredient of Positive Youth Development and the "M" in BIG-M. Mastery is achieved when youth build their knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and then demonstrate they can use these abilities. Self-confident youth believe they are capable because they have solved problems and met challenges.

4-H members achieve mastery through hands-on learning and by demonstrating their knowledge and skills to others.
4-H Facts

4-H Pledge

At the beginning of 4-H club meetings, members stand and recite the 4-H Pledge. By saying the 4-H Pledge as a club, members are reminded about the things we value — youth decision-making, loyalty, service to others, and healthy living. It’s an important part of a club meeting and it’s an important part of being a 4-H member.

I Pledge

My Head to Clearer Thinking,
(Point to forehead with right hand)

My Heart to Greater Loyalty,
(Place right hand over heart)

My Hands to Larger Service,
(Arms slightly bent with palms up)

And My Health to Better Living,
(Sweep bent arms down to your side)

For My Club, My Community, My Country, and My World.

4-H Emblem

The 4-H emblem is a four-leaf clover with the letter "H" on each leaf. The leaves of the 4-H Clover are green or black and the letters are white.

4-H Motto

“To Make the Best Better”

We Believe in

✓ Youth as leaders and decision makers
✓ Learning by doing
✓ Youth making a difference
✓ Goal-setting to achieve growth

4-H Colors

Green and White
Find Your Place in 4-H

Ages 5-7
- Cloverbuds
  - Make new friends
  - Have fun
  - Make things
  - Show and tell
  - Play games

Ages 8-18
- 4-H Clubs and Programs
  - Make new friends
  - Have fun
  - Explore your interests
  - Create an exhibit
  - Go on tours
  - Attend workshops

Ages 13-18
- Learn to be a Leader
  - Train
  - Practice
  - Do

Use What You Learn
- Share What You Learn
  - Show others how-to
  - Give a presentation
  - Compete in contests
  - Exhibit projects

Participate in Local, State, National, and Global Events

Serve Your Community
- Help others
- Give to others
- Plan a service activity

Attend 4-H Camp
- Gain independence
- Experience adventure and challenges

Make Connections
- Friends
- Mentors
- Leaders
- Future employers
- Experts

Be a Leader
- Be confident
- Be competent
- Be independent
- Share your abilities with others
- Volunteer your talents
- Make a difference in your community and your world

Work in Partnership with Others

For more information on 4-H, visit the National 4-H website at 4-h.org
**Glossary**

**4-H**

4-H — the youth development program of Extension designed for young people ages 5–19; members participate in clubs, activities, and events and complete project work with the group or on their own.

4-H Ambassadors — teen leaders who promote 4-H programs and encourage others to get involved.

4-H Club — a group of young people led by screened volunteers and administered by Extension who participate in 4-H learning experiences, educational activities, and events.

4-H Foundation — raises funds from individuals, businesses, corporations, and organizations to provide financial support for state and county 4-H programs.

4-H Member — any youth who is enrolled in 4-H and participates in a minimum of one meeting of a 4-H club or other 4-H sponsored event or activity.

4-H Volunteer — an adult or older youth who provides support and leadership to a 4-H club.

**A**

Achievement Program — an annual event that recognizes 4-H youth, clubs, leaders, and community partners for their achievements.

**Activity Leader** — a volunteer that leads or helps coordinate a club or county 4-H activity, such as a judging contest or fundraiser.

**American Income Life** — the insurance company that offers the 4-H club accident insurance and special activities coverage for accidents.

**Award Application** — the form 4-H members complete to record the work they have accomplished during the past year and in prior years of club work; local and state winners are selected; awards may include medals, certificates, pins, trips, cash, etc.

**B**

BIG-M — a term used to describe the four developmental needs of young people: Belonging, Independence, Generosity, and Mastery.

**Camp** — a day or overnight outdoor learning experience that provides fun, hands-on, real-world learning; topics may include nature study, environmental education, outdoor recreation, or water activities.

**Camp Counselor** — an adult or older teen who assists with 4-H camp activities; counselors usually stay in cabins with campers, serve as mentors, and supervise campers during daily activities.

**Citizenship Washington Focus (CWF)** — a trip to the nation's capital for older youth; participants learn about the government and how they can make an impact in their communities; the trip includes visits to historical monuments and important government buildings.

**Cloverbuds** — youth 5–7 years old that are enrolled in 4-H; Cloverbud members participate in 4-H projects that are age appropriate; Cloverbuds can be an independent group or affiliated with a 4-H club.

**Community Service Project** — a project planned by 4-H members to meet a community need.

**Conference Judging** — 4-H members meet with a judge for project evaluation; the judge asks questions about what the 4-H member learned while working on the project and gives feedback to the member.

**County 4-H Foundation** — a county or Extension unit group of volunteers chartered to raise funds to provide financial support for 4-H programs.

**County Extension Director** — an Extension staff member responsible for program, staff, and fiscal supervision within an Extension unit; the unit may be a single county or multiple counties.

**Demonstration** — a presentation for a 4-H member to show and explain how to do something; many counties have public presentation contests for members to showcase what they learned in their project.

**Developmentally Appropriate** — learning activities that are planned for the abilities, skills, and needs of specific age groups.

**Educator or Agent** — an Extension staff member with subject matter expertise; youth development educators or 4-H agents oversee the 4-H program.

**Enrollment Form** — 4-H members complete this form annually; the form collects contact information and other information required for reports, such as age, gender, and race or ethnicity; this form is required for all 4-H members and volunteers who work directly with youth.

**Event** — an educational or social occasion scheduled at a particular place and time.

**Exhibit** — a completed project, trained animal, or presentation prepared for evaluation or display at a county fair, contest, or competition.

**Exhibit Opportunity** — an opportunity for 4-H members to display their completed projects or performances; judges evaluate the projects and award ribbons or trophies based on the quality of the work.
Experiential Learning — the learning process that engages participants in hands-on learning activities; after the learning activity, young people reflect on what they experienced and learned and think about how to apply what they learned to real-world situations.

Extension Council — the Extension Council assists Extension staff to determine the program priorities for local 4-H and Extension programs; the council is made up of local volunteers with a variety of backgrounds and expertise.

Extension Office or Unit — one or more units that work together to provide Extension programming to local citizens and youth.

Extension Program Coordinator or Assistant — Extension staff member who teams with other Extension staff and volunteers to plan, conduct, and evaluate local 4-H youth development programs, activities, and events.

**J**

Judging Contests — a learning experience for youth to identify and/or judge quality of products, livestock, or project work.

Junior Leader — an older 4-H member who assists adult volunteers in carrying out club responsibilities or teaching other members.

**L**

Land Grant University — the university designated by Congress to receive the benefits of the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890, which provided for college education for the working classes.

Learn-by-Doing — 4-H practice of hands-on or experiential learning.

Life Skills — abilities youth learn to help them live successful, productive lives; 4-H youth programs provide learning opportunities for young people to gain life skills, practice them, and use them throughout their lives (see page 15 for more details).

**N**

National 4-H Conference — the Secretary of Agriculture holds this annual event in Washington, D.C. for 4-H youth, volunteers, and staff to discuss issues affecting youth.

National 4-H Congress — state 4-H award winners apply to attend this annual conference in Atlanta, GA.

National 4-H Week — the first full week of October annually; current 4-H youth and leaders are recognized and new 4-H opportunities are promoted in local communities.

National Youth Science Day (NYSD) — during National 4-H Week, 4-H members conduct and investigate scientific experiments provided by National 4-H Council.

**O**

Organizational Leader — a volunteer who is the main contact for the 4-H club and responsible for enrolling members, ordering 4-H project books, communicating with the local Extension office, and coordinating 4-H club meetings.

**P**

Positive Youth Development — supports the growth and development of youth through four developmental needs: Belonging, Independence, Generosity, and Mastery, also known as BIG-M.

Project — a developmentally appropriate series of hands-on learning activities which help youth reach their learning goals.

Project Leader — a volunteer that has expertise in a project area and helps 4-H members learn and master skills for that project.

Project Planning Guide — a form 4-H'ers use to plan what they want to learn and the skills they want to master.

Public Speaking Contest — competitive event for 4-H members presenting speeches or demonstrations on a variety of topics; members may advance to the state competition.

**R**

Recognition — a 4-H program that allows all members an opportunity to be recognized for their participation, experiences, or competition.
**S**

(4-H) Show, Exhibition, Fair — 4-H members demonstrate their project accomplishments and mastery through project exhibits, shows, or competitions; judges with expertise in the project area evaluate the projects; ribbons, trophies, and other awards are presented to the members based on the quality of their 4-H work.

**SPIN (S)pecial (I)nterest)**

Clubs — youth with a common interest or hobby join a SPIN club to explore the topic, for example, robotics, shooting sports, sailing, food preparation, or dog agility.

**State Fair** — an annual competitive and social event to showcase a state; 4-H members are selected to exhibit outstanding 4-H projects, including livestock projects.

**T**

Teen Teachers — older youth who volunteer their time to teach younger youth in clubs and groups.

**U**

University Extension — provides practical, research-based information and programs to help individuals, families, farms, businesses, and communities; its mission is to help citizens put knowledge to work; Extension offers educational programs in energy & environmental stewardship, food safety & security, economic development & workforce preparedness, family health, financial security & wellness, and youth development.

**V**

Volunteer Screening — an Extension process to prevent child abuse and neglect and to protect youth in the 4-H program; volunteers who will work with young people in the 4-H program may be asked to complete the screening process.

**Y**

Youth Volunteers — youth age 19 or younger who volunteer their time to support 4-H programs.

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**4-H'ERS BUILD LIFE SKILLS**

4-H programs provide learning opportunities for young people to build life skills, practice them, and use them throughout their lives. Life skills help young people to be successful and create a productive and fulfilling future.
4-H Club

Name of 4-H club ____________________________________________

The club meets at (where) ____________________________________

Meeting time and date ____________________________

4-H club leader ____________________________________________

Leader's phone number ________________________________

Leader's email address ________________________________

Club officers

President ______________________________________________

Vice-President __________________________________________

Secretary ______________________________________________

Treasurer ______________________________________________

Reporter ______________________________________________

Recreation Leader _______________________________________

4-H youth development staff ______________________________

Staff's phone number ____________________________________