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## 4-H 13 What about 4-H?

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Nebraska Cooperative Extension 4-H 13

# WHAT ABOUT 4-H?

by William E. Caldwell  
Assistant Director, 4-H

- Answers to the most frequently asked questions about 4-H.
- If you want to know more, contact your Cooperative Extension Agent who is listed in the phone book under County Government.



Issued in furtherance of  
Cooperative Extension work,  
Acts of May 8 and June 30,  
1914, in cooperation with



the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Leo E. Lucas, Director  
of Cooperative Extension, University of Nebraska, Institute  
of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Cooperative Extension provides information and educational programs to all  
people without regard to race, color, national origin, sex or handicap.

## 4-H

### **What is 4-H?**

Four-H is an organization for boys and girls who are nine to 19 years old in the current calendar year. It is open to everyone, regardless of race, religion, color, sex, economics, handicap or place of residence.

### **Who's in charge of 4-H?**

Four-H is sponsored in Nebraska by Cooperative Extension of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Nationally, it is part of the Extension Service in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The people in charge locally are the Extension agents of Cooperative Extension, supported, in part, by your county commissioners.

### **What do the H's stand for?**

Head, Heart, Hands and Health. Four-H members pledge—

"My head to clearer thinking"

"My heart to greater loyalty"

"My hands to larger service"

"My health to better living."

### **What is the 4-H emblem?**

A green four-leaf clover with a white "H" on each clover leaf. The official emblem is copyrighted and may be used only as approved by 4-H.

### **What do you learn in 4-H?**

Members learn by doing: practical skills, such as cooking or repairing an engine, and life skills that help 4-H'ers become capable adults.

### **What are life skills?**

Life skills include understanding self; relating to others; communicating; decision making/problem solving; acquiring, analyzing and using information; managing

bers, the places they have to meet and the leadership available. The ideal club or group is big enough to have fun together, but small enough for everybody to feel a part of the group. The average club in Nebraska usually has five to 20 members and one to three leaders.

## 4-H Leaders

### **What is a 4-H leader?**

An adult or teen who works voluntarily with a group of 4-H youth.

### **Are there different kinds of leaders?**

Yes. Some leaders teach members how to do things and are called "project leaders." They usually have a special interest or skill such as photography or clothing or gardening. Leaders who help a group get organized and run their meetings are called "organizational leaders."

### **How many leaders should a 4-H club or group have?**

That depends on the size of the club and how old the members are. Many clubs have an organizational leader and several project leaders.

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

Your main help would be Cooperative Extension in your county—the office secretary and the Extension agent. They would automatically put you on the 4-H leaders' mailing list, invite you to special training meetings for leaders, and give you the materials you need to organize a 4-H club. Be sure to ask for the name of an experienced leader near you whom you can call if you have questions.

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

Sure—if they have the time and inter-

resources; and working with others in groups.

## 4-H Members

### **Why do young people like 4-H?**

They have fun with friends at meetings, social activities, tours, camps and fairs. They learn to do interesting things: take care of growing things like animals and plants, redecorate their rooms, fix their bikes, take pictures and practice cooking. Some help others with 4-H educational programs.

### **How do you join?**

Call your Cooperative Extension Agent or a local 4-H leader to see if there is room in a club near you. If not, several interested young people with an adult or two to help them may start a new club. Check with the Extension office to find out what projects and activities are available.

## 4-H Clubs

### **How do you get a 4-H group organized?**

Have a meeting with the young people who are interested and the adults who are willing to help. Publicize it through the school or any place where young people and their parents can be reached.

### **What do you do at the first meeting?**

Get acquainted and have fun with a group mixer and/or some refreshments. Show and talk about some projects the group might like. (Give this some thought in advance and talk with the Extension agent or an experienced 4-H leader.) Discuss when and where and how often the group will meet.

### **What about officers?**

Four-H clubs may have officers and

whatever committees they need to run their own business. Four-H has materials available for presidents, vice-presidents, secretaries, treasurers, news reporters, and health and safety officers. The club may have more or fewer officers, depending on its needs. It is a good idea to wait until the second or third meeting to elect officers so members know each other. Some clubs rotate officer duties among members.

### **Who names a club or group?**

The members of the club or group do—with their leader's guidance.

### **How often do 4-H clubs meet?**

Some clubs meet every week for a month or two and some meet once or twice a month all year long. This depends on the group and what it wants to do. Four-H clubs may organize any time of the year. Sometimes members have to be enrolled in a project by a certain time to be eligible for a specific activity. Check this with your Extension agent.

### **Should 4-H clubs have dues?**

This depends on their need for money. There are no state or national 4-H dues. If a club wants money for some activities, it usually charges dues or conducts money-making activities. Dues may not be used to keep someone from joining 4-H.

### **Where do 4-H clubs meet?**

Any place large enough that is convenient for the members of the group. Some clubs meet in leaders' or members' homes or garages. Some meet in a central place such as a school, church or community room.

### **How big should a group be?**

This depends on the age of the mem-

est. Sometimes big clubs divide these jobs and have several project leaders to meet all the interests of the 4-H members.

### **What is a recruiter-helper?**

These are experienced people (or ones specially trained) who serve as a resource in recruiting and helping new leaders during their first year as 4-H leaders.

### **Who are service leaders?**

The service leader helps the organizational leaders obtain information and project manuals and assists in arranging group project training, etc. This leader is experienced and enjoys helping others succeed.

## **4-H Meetings**

### **What do 4-H clubs and groups do at meetings?**

Four-H clubs usually do four general kinds of things: project work, business meetings, recreation or social activities, and special interest programs.

### **Do they do all of these things at one meeting?**

Sometimes, if they have a little business to conduct, they work on their projects for awhile and play a game or two. Sometimes the whole meeting is devoted to one thing. Members bring their dogs and practice obedience training, or they elect officers and plan the club program, or they have a roller skating party, or tour a local bakery.

### **Who plans the program for the club?**

Members of the club. If the club is small, this might be done at a meeting of the whole group. If the club is large,

by leaders or Extension agents. If you have an idea for one, it must be approved by your Extension agent.

### **What is an exhibit?**

An exhibit is an object or display designed to help the young person feel he or she is capable and has accomplished something. Ideally, it motivates members to learn and to have fun in a 4-H project. An exhibit is not an end in itself nor does it measure the learning that takes place in a project. A blue ribbon is only one measure of success. Self-recognition and self-satisfaction for having completed a project also are important awards to try for.

### **Are projects done individually or as a group?**

Both. Some projects like biking are more fun when done as a group. Others, like making a dress or making cookies will be done individually by each member of the group.

## **4-H Parents**

### **How do you explain the role of a 4-H leader to parents?**

Be sure they realize leaders are volunteers who are not being paid. Invite parents to a 4-H meeting or ask if they would like to hold meetings in their homes so they can see how leaders work with clubs.

### **How do you get parents to help?**

Ask them. Be specific about jobs the club or group needs help with. Think positively. People who expect help usually get it. Offer a choice of jobs. People have different amounts of time and ability. Ask the young people to ask their parents to help.