



# New Jersey 4-H *Head + Heart + Hands + Health* Leader Training Series

## Section II

# Starting Your Own 4-H Club



Cooperating Agencies:

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and County Boards of Chosen Freeholders. Rutgers Cooperative Extension, a unit of the Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, is an equal opportunity program provider and employer.



## ***How to Start a 4-H Club***

### **Ways in Which 4-H Clubs Operate**

- Community based clubs typically meet in the evenings or on weekends and offer self-chosen, multiple learning experiences and activities.
- In-school clubs meet during school hours. They have officers (except K-3) and planned activities beyond school enrichment.
- After-school clubs are organized within child care settings. They have officers (except K-3) and planned activities.
- Military 4-H clubs are organized by the Armed Forces, often on military installations, and principally for military dependents.

### **Getting Started**

1. Begin by recruiting at least five members from three different families. Grade requirements for 4-H members are:
  - 4-H Cloverbud member—grades K-3. Refer to *NJ 4-H Cloverbud Program: 4-H for Younger Members (Grade K-3)*.
  - Standard 4-H Club member—grades 4-13 (13 is one year out of high school).
2. Organize your club at the first meeting. If convenient, you may want a separate session for parents. Invite parents to the first organizational club meeting and tell them how important it is for them to come. Encourage parents to attend meetings and to become involved whenever and however possible. It's usually best to make specific requests for help from individuals, based on their interests and abilities. However, under no circumstances should adult involvement in the club overshadow member participation! Refer to *Parent Involvement in 4-H* and *Parents: Helping Your 4-H'er Succeed*.
3. What to do at the first meeting (or shortly thereafter):
  - Describe available 4-H projects to the members (those projects you're willing to lead). Ask members to select, or at least begin to think about, projects to be carried by the club.
  - Select a name for the club. (Refer to *Selecting a Name for Your 4-H Club*.)
  - Complete the Club Charter application and also the 4-H Club By-laws template provided by your 4-H staff. This is required before you can be recognized as an official 4-H Club. (Refer to [www.nj4h.rutgers.edu/policies](http://www.nj4h.rutgers.edu/policies), see "club charter policy" under "club related policies.")
  - Cloverbud clubs (K-3rd grade) do not have officers. For standard clubs (4th-13th grade), ask for nominations and elect officers for the club. Depending on the size and type of club, typical officers might include: president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and reporter. (Refer to *4-H Club Officers Make the Meeting*.)



- Ask all members and leaders to fill out the appropriate registration forms provided by 4-H staff. Be sure all are complete! Deliver or send these forms to the county 4-H office as soon as possible. Members and leaders are placed on a 4-H mailing list to receive regular 4-H newsletters and other important information.
  - Each new member should receive a copy of *Welcome to 4-H! A guide for new 4-H members and their parents*. Copies are available from your county 4-H office.
  - Decide on a *regular* club meeting schedule, which includes date, time, and place.
4. Obtain necessary materials for 4-H project(s), such as member and leader/project guides and project record books from your county 4-H office.

## Suggestions

1. Keep in contact with the 4-H office. Feel free to ask for help or materials. The 4-H office is always a busy place, but the staff and secretaries will do their best to help you promptly. Remember to send *Club Meeting Reports* regularly. Copies are available from the 4-H office and also online at [www.nj4h.rutgers.edu/publications](http://www.nj4h.rutgers.edu/publications) (see *Club Meeting Report*). This keeps the 4-H staff informed of your club's activities and may be printed in the 4-H newsletter so other 4-H clubs will know what your club is doing.
2. Recruit co-leaders if desired. At the very least, ask for parental support. SHARE the workload!
3. Review the main points of the most recent 4-H newsletter at club meetings by reading aloud so members will know what's going on in the total 4-H program. Encourage all members to participate in a variety of county 4-H activities.
4. Encourage parents as well as members to read the 4-H newsletter and access the website.
5. Attend county 4-H leader meetings, workshops, and forums. This will keep you informed of details about the 4-H program, and also provide an opportunity to share ideas with other 4-H volunteers and learn from their experiences. Participate in your county leaders' association as well as your project advisory committee.
6. Keep your leader information/orientation materials and other 4-H information, such as the 4-H newsletter, "on file" for future reference.

*Your decision to serve as a volunteer 4-H leader is sincerely appreciated!*

*Revised by Gloria Kraft and Ginny Powell.  
Written by Keith G. Diem.*

***For more information on New Jersey 4-H, please visit [www.nj4h.rutgers.edu](http://www.nj4h.rutgers.edu).***

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## Parent Involvement in 4-H

4-H is a family affair! Or it should be, and this means that parents or guardians of your 4-H members should be an important part of your program. Parent 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 4-H club programs. Active parents mean active members:

$$\begin{array}{l} \textit{Favorable} \\ \textit{Attitudes} \end{array} + \begin{array}{l} \textit{Parent} \\ \textit{Interests} \end{array} + \begin{array}{l} \textit{Active Parent} \\ \textit{Cooperation} \end{array} = \begin{array}{l} \textit{Successful} \\ \textit{4-H Clubs} \end{array}$$

### Why Should Parents Participate in 4-H?

Parent/guardian participation in 4-H results in the following benefits:

- Family involvement in 4-H offers opportunities where both child and parent participate with common interest, strengthening family ties.
- Active parent participation can strengthen and broaden the 4-H program in any local club or in any county.
- When parental support is positive, the club is likely to become stronger, larger, and more active.
- In clubs where parental support is evident, individual members receive more personal attention and guidance from leaders and parents.
- Club activities and events will develop and expand with the additional support of parents. 4-H can have a positive influence on the lives of thousands of boys and girls. This happens when parents care enough to share their time, efforts, and talents.

### Ideas to Help Inform and Interest Parents and Gain Their Cooperation

- Involve members and parents in setting goals and planning your club's program each year.
- Become familiar with the interests and special talents of your members' parents. Ask for advice in areas where they can contribute, then make *good* use of good ideas. Be specific with requests. Use the *Parent Interest Inventory* on the last page of this information sheet.
- When parents volunteer to help, make sure they are involved in something worthwhile. Make a mental note of their offer and return their call within a few days with some *specific* task in which they can help.
- Involve parents in sharing leadership as project leaders. Emphasize that they can teach a skill or project that may require only a few 4-H meetings for the entire year. If the parent enjoys this role, encourage them to become a registered/appointed 4-H volunteer.



- Keep parents informed. Help them understand the 4-H objectives. Send notes and letters directly to parents about the club program. Allow time for discussion before or after meetings with parents. E-mails are a great tool for keeping families informed. Be sure your club has a phone chain for emergency cancellations and important messages.
- Invite parents to club meetings. For new members and parents, you might want to have a special meeting explaining the 4-H program and your club's activities. Let parents know what is expected of their child.
- Recognize both members and their parents. Thank parents for their support both personally and in public. Compliment parents for their contributions to the club program.
- Maintain parent interest. Arrange a special social event with parents. Ask county 4-H staff to attend a parent night program. Introduce parents to the 4-H staff so they can become better acquainted.
- Encourage members to make their 4-H work a topic of family conversation.
- Solicit parent involvement at the 4-H fair and other activities and events where 4-H club work is showcased.
- Give parents a copy of *Parents: Helping your 4-H'er Succeed*.

*Revised by Karen Mansue, Jim Nichnadowicz, and Ginny Powell.  
Written by Erika U. Leal.*

*References:*

*Smith, Carolyn A., **New York State 4-H Club Management, a Resource Guide**, Cornell Cooperative Extension, November 1982.*

**Parents-Partners on the 4-H Team** (*tape-slide program*), Cooperative Extension Service, The Ohio State University.



## 4-H Parent Interest Survey

Dear 4-H Parents or Guardians:

Welcome to the 4-H Family! 4-H helps youth to develop knowledge, attitude, and skills they need to become competent, caring, and contributing citizens of the world. Parents and 4-H leaders working together can do so much more for the girls and boys than either can do alone.

We hope you share in 4-H by encouraging your child to participate and, as the 4-H motto says, "To Make the Best Better!"

Please check the things you are willing to do to provide learning opportunities for the 4-H members. Return to the club leader.

### Home

- \_\_\_\_\_ Enable my child to attend all meetings and encourage him/her to be an active, contributing member of the club.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Encourage my child to start and complete projects on time. I will take an active interest and encourage pride in his/her own achievements.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Encourage my child to participate in county workshops, public presentations, fair, camp, and other activities which enhance learning opportunities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Encourage my child to keep an up-to-date calendar of 4-H meetings and events.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Encourage my child to maintain current records of 4-H projects and activities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Enable my child to meet financial responsibilities in monthly dues, project expenses, etc.

### Club

- \_\_\_\_\_ Provide an occasional meeting place for the club.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Help provide light refreshments for a 4-H meeting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Share a special interest or hobby with the group. List \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Help carpool transportation for meetings or field trips.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Be a leader's helper for one project. List \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Help youth prepare for public presentations or fair.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Serve on committee to help plan and conduct events.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make telephone calls.

### County

- \_\_\_\_\_ Help carpool transportation to county meetings or events.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Help at county events.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Serve on county committee as an interested parent.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Assist during the 4-H fair (set up, take down, staffing booths, etc.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (day) \_\_\_\_\_ (evening) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_



## *Did You Know...*



The mission of the National 4-H Headquarters is to advance knowledge for agriculture, the environment, human health and well-being, and communities by creating opportunities for youth.

[www.national4-hheadquarters.gov](http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov)

*For more information on New Jersey 4-H, please visit [www.nj4h.rutgers.edu](http://www.nj4h.rutgers.edu).*

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## **Parents: Helping Your 4-H'er Succeed**

4-H is a family affair. Both parents (and guardians) and members need to be committed to participating in 4-H. The following are suggestions to make 4-H a positive experience for all.

### **Family Participation**

Parents/guardians are welcome to stay at club meetings as an observer. However we do ask the following of you:

- If you have any questions or comments during the meeting, please make arrangements with the leader to discuss them at a mutually convenient time.
- Regular meetings are for the members only. If younger siblings come along because of childcare considerations, please be sure they are respectfully quiet and away from the meeting area while it is in progress. Check with the leader about bringing younger siblings to field trips or activities. Not all programs are appropriate for younger children.
- If you find the leader might need another set of hands, please offer your assistance to the leader.

Field trips and activities: Often your child will attend outings or special activities in 4-H. Please make arrangements for your child to attend these functions as this will enhance their 4-H experience. Keep the leader informed if your child will not be able to attend. If you are available to assist with these special activities, let the leader know.

### **The Do's and Don'ts of Being a 4-H Parent/Guardian**

#### **DO's**

- **DO** take time to learn about 4-H, what it stands for and how it operates.
- **DO** be sure your child arrives for meetings on time and is picked up promptly when the meeting ends. If your child needs to miss a meeting or event, please contact the leaders ahead of time.
- **DO** advise your son or daughter in selecting 4-H projects. Help them select a project they are interested in, have the ability to accomplish and is one for which you can help furnish needed materials, facilities, financing, and guidance.
- **DO** show your interest and enthusiasm for the 4-H projects selected. Find out what is suggested for members to do and learn. Encourage your child to work on the project and record keeping all year long and not to wait until the last minute.
- **DO** encourage your child to participate in county and state events, such as public presentations, camp, fair, project clinics, workshops, and other activities.





- **DO** keep the purpose of the 4-H project in perspective. Realize that a project is simply a teaching tool and a method for involving boys and girls in a worthwhile activity. Above all, remember that your child is more important than the 4-H project.
- **DO** keep in mind that the most important goal of 4-H is personal growth of the individual.
- **DO** give encouragement when your 4-H'er succeeds and even more when he/she fails. Judging and awards are not final exams. Whatever ratings are given or scores received, help your child to see progress made, things that have been learned, and goals that have been reached.
- **DO** offer your home for 4-H meetings; volunteer your hobbies and talents to 4-H leaders; provide transportation to other members.
- **DO** be tactful—with 4-H leaders, agents, judges, and your child.
- **DO** remember that 4-H leaders and judges are often volunteering their own time for the benefit of your child; don't forget to show them your appreciation.
- **DO ASK QUESTIONS!** If you have questions, please take the time after meetings to ask them.
- **DO** let your children make mistakes. Sometimes it's the best way to learn.

### DON'TS

- **DON'T** do your child's project for them, even though you may be able to do it faster, better, easier, and with less mess.
- **DON'T** discourage a child's enthusiasm by providing too much corrective influence or criticism.
- **DON'T** let the desire to win overpower your child's ability to learn. Do keep in mind that the 4-H experience should be an educational one.
- **DON'T** schedule family vacations which conflict with your child's 4-H schedule. Check with the leader for county fair dates. All 4-H members love the fair; encourage your child to participate.
- **DON'T** re-live your childhood experiences through your child.
- **DON'T** view your child as an extension of yourself. Don't view his/her success or failure as a reflection of your ability or worth.
- **DON'T** assume your child is always right. Keep open communication with the leaders.



## Parent's Pledge

*I pledge my HEAD to give information to help my child see things clearly and to make wise decisions.*

*I pledge my HEART to encourage and support my child, whether he has successes or disappointments.*

*I pledge my HANDS to help my child's club; if I cannot be a leader, I can help in many equally important ways.*

*I pledge my HEALTH to keep my child strong and well for better living through 4-H, for my child's club, our community, our country, and our world.*

## Making the Best Better

Ask yourself why you wanted your child to join 4-H. Winning competitive awards provides recognition but it is not the purpose of participation. Your child has the opportunity to master life skills, develop a sense of belonging, gain independence, and experience the rewards of giving to others. Be a supportive parent and help your child and 4-H leader "To Make the Best Better!"

*Revised by Karen Mansue, Jim Nichnadowicz, and Ginny Powell.  
Written by Ginny Powell.*

### For More Information

*Welcome to 4-H! A Guide for New 4-H Club Members and Their Parents*



## *Did You Know...*

The National Association of Extension 4-H Agents was organized in 1946 to provide professional development opportunities to Extension agents with 4-H program responsibilities.

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## Selecting a 4-H Project

In New Jersey, many 4-H Clubs emphasize one project where all members work on the same subject. Often project selection is made before joining any club. A 4-H'er who has been involved in the 4-H Cloverbud program may have been introduced to a number of project areas before becoming a regular member of a club. Some youth come into the program knowing what they would like to do or which club they want to join.

Even with these opportunities, it is possible to come across a youth who may need help finding an interest. In 4-H, youth have the chance to learn about a project area in depth over several years or may enjoy learning about something that interests them for only a year or two. Sometimes it may be a combination of the two.

Selecting a 4-H project can be a big decision for 4-H members and their parents. Parents, leaders, and the youth must be involved in this process for a rewarding 4-H experience. Four major factors go into the decision:

- *Time.* Youth are busier than ever today with sports, church, friends, extracurricular activities, music lessons, and other youth programs. Be realistic with the amount of time a 4-H'er has for a project in which they are interested.
- *Interest.* This may sound too simplistic, but what is the 4-H member truly interested in? What skills do they already possess? What do they want to learn about?
- *Space.* What is the space required for a project area? Large backyard, barn, work space in the garage?
- *Resources.* Are there adults who are willing and able to share their knowledge? Are there financial constraints? (Many projects can cost a lot.) Is it possible to fundraise to do this project? Is transportation an issue?

## Leader's Role

As a leader, you play an important role in helping youth select a project for the year. You are the liaison between the parents and the office. Many times, the 4-H staff does not meet the parents until well into the 4-H year.

Obtain a listing of current projects offered and/or a selection of available project guides and project record books from your county 4-H Extension office.

Plan a meeting to give a brief overview of several project areas. Allow time for the 4-H'ers and their parents to look at different project materials. Discuss whether adults are available to help with specific projects. Also discuss time, money, and supplies required for the project. Finally, discuss what to do if the project the 4-H'er wants to work on is not offered.

Use the following page to help youth decide on a project.

## How Many Projects Can a Member Take?

The number of projects a member takes depends on:

- The age of the 4-H'er
- The experience of the 4-H'er



- The ability of the 4-H'er
- The amount of money involved/available to the 4-H'er
- The time available to 4-H'er/leader/parent
- The ability of a 4-H'er to work with minimal direction
- The time needed to learn about and participate in other parts of 4-H beyond project work, i.e., public speaking, trips, camp, other county events

## Goal Writing for 4-H Members

A big part of your 4-H year is having goals. Having goals is like going on a trip. You need to know where you want to go so you know when you've arrived! Goals are important and are useful for any 4-H project. Your record books have a place for you to record your goals at the beginning of the 4-H year. Bring your book to your club meetings to help remember to work towards meeting your goals. There are two kinds of goals: ones for yourself and ones for your club.

### Here are some hints for setting and working towards goals:

- Use a club meeting early in the year to set your goals. This time is a great opportunity for your club to set goals as a group, and you work together as a team and hear what others in your club would like to do.
- Seek advice from your leader or parent on what some reasonable goals will be for you. Adults who know you can help.
- Don't try to fit too much in one goal. You can usually tell if there are a lot of "ands" in the statement.
- Use a club meeting near the end of the 4-H year to talk with your leader and other members about which goals you have met and which ones you need some help with.
- It's okay if you don't meet a goal... you can keep it for next year!
- If you feel bored with your goal, that's a sign it may be time to try something new or more challenging.

## Writing Goals

Setting and writing goals does not have to be hard. Think of what you want to learn during the year and write it down. Good goals start with "I" statements:

- |                      |                           |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>I will learn</i>  | <i>I will decrease</i>    |
| <i>I will go</i>     | <i>I will produce</i>     |
| <i>I will attend</i> | <i>I will promote</i>     |
| <i>I will do</i>     | <i>I will improve</i>     |
| <i>I will give</i>   | <i>I will participate</i> |
| <i>I will teach</i>  | <i>I will increase</i>    |
| <i>I will work</i>   | <i>I will...</i>          |

Remember this is NOT creative writing, but creative thinking!



## Sample Goals

Most 4-H project record books include sample goals you might use. Below is a sample list of goals to pick from if you are having trouble deciding where to start. Some may seem easy, and others may seem hard. They may not be the best goals for you unless you add or take away something from them until they fit YOU just right. Goals should be challenging but not too hard! Ask your leader for help. Others in your club may want to learn the same things!

### General 4-H (includes Leadership/Citizenship) Goals

- I will learn more about 4-H in other states.
- I will learn how the county government works.
- I will write my congressional representative about an issue that I really care about.
- I will learn about how the federal government works and report it to \_\_\_\_\_.
- I will learn about how the state government works.
- I will attend 100% (or 90% or 70% or \_\_\_\_\_ %) of my club meetings this year.
- I will learn how to set up a file system for important documents (like report cards, judging sheets, letter of recommendation, my 4-H membership card, etc.)
- I will teach other youth how to \_\_\_\_\_.

### Animal Project Goals

- I will learn how to groom my animal.
- I will give vaccinations to my animal.
- I will learn about how to prevent rabies.
- I will teach my \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.
- I will exercise my \_\_\_\_\_ every \_\_\_\_\_.

### Horticulture Goals

- I will learn how to take cuttings.
- I will learn how to care for bulbs.
- I will learn how to force bulbs.

### Arts and Crafts/Fine Arts Goals

- I will learn how to work with watercolors.
- I will learn how to work with acrylics.
- I will learn how to work with something I've never used before.

### Photography Goals

- I will learn how to focus a manual camera on a subject.
- I will learn how to center and crop a picture to make it interesting.
- I will learn how to tell a story using pictures.



## 4-H Projects That Look Interesting To Me - Project Selection

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

### Instructions

As you and your parents review different project materials, list the ones that look interesting to you. Put a check by the statements under your choices that are true. The more checks you have, the more likely you will have a successful project.

Project \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ There is a leader for this project.
- \_\_\_\_\_ My parents will help with this project if no leader is available.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I have the money for expenses this project will require.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I can earn the money to pay for this project.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I have the time to do this project.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I have the ability to do the work in this project.
- \_\_\_\_\_ My parents will allow me to work on this project.
- \_\_\_\_\_ My parents will arrange transportation to project meetings.
- \_\_\_\_\_ My parents will get me to county events.
- \_\_\_\_\_ This project will help in meeting my goals.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I really want to work on this project.

If more than one project interests you, complete a worksheet for each project.

Keep this worksheet in your record book.

*Revised by Alayne Torretta.*

*Written by Betty Ann Smith.*

**Reference:** Powell, Ginny, *Leaders' Notebook* (Ohio 4-H)

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## Selecting a Name for Your 4-H Club

### Naming a Club is Challenging, Fun, and Must Follow Certain Guidelines

4-H strives to maintain and enhance a positive image of 4-H. The 4-H Name and Emblem is regulated under federal statute. National 4-H Headquarters (USDA), the Extension Director, and the State 4-H Office can authorize use of the 4-H name and emblem. A club must obtain a 4-H charter in order to use the name and emblem. Contact your county 4-H office for assistance with the charter application.

The first step in completing your club charter application is to select a name identifying your 4-H club. This name should reflect the individual character of the club while representing a positive image of 4-H to the community.

Each 4-H Club is a unique group of individuals who work together toward common goals. A club name should reflect the purpose(s) of the club, often relating to the specific project(s), or the geographic area where the members live, or the club meeting location. Allow all of the members to participate in selecting a name for the club.

#### The following are suggestions to help guide you:

- *Unique Identity.* "The Nimble Thimbles 4-H Club" may reflect a sewing club, as "Stable Mates" a horse club. "Johnson County 4-H Teen Council" and "Ocean Waves 4-H Club" reflect an area club.
- *Inclusive.* 4-H Youth Development programs are offered to all youth, grades K-13, on a grade appropriate basis, without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. All possible efforts will be made to include rather than exclude youth in events conducted by 4-H Youth Development Program.
- *Reflect Character and Integrity.* 4-H helps to develop positive character in club members. Naming a club after a questionable or a notorious figure would be inappropriate. 4-H should be a safe, positive and open environment for young people. Avoid any names that might be demeaning, offensive, or intimidating. "Billy the Kid 4-H", "4-H Gangsters", and the "Chain Gang" are examples of inappropriate names.
- *Stand the Test of Time.* Since the NJ State 4-H Office and National 4-H Headquarters will issue a permanent charter to your club, the name should be sufficiently adaptable to changing times. Cute and creative names are fine, but consider whether any potential club members might shy away from joining the club or be embarrassed by the name as the club members' age. "Mighty Sprouts 4-H Club" might be cute for a Cloverbud club but less appropriate as the club members enter their teen years. "The Bell Bottom Belles" is an example of a name limited to a fashion trend.
- *Comply with Copyright Regulations.* Just as 4-H is a protected name and emblem, so are many names of TV shows, singing groups, and popular products. Avoid using such popular names or titles, therefore avoiding copyright violation.





When selecting a club name, think about it carefully, be creative, and use a little common sense. Sometimes a club selects a name that is a duplicate of another club. When in doubt about acceptance of a name, contact the county 4-H office for “approval” or suggestions. Your county 4-H office sends your club charter application for final approval to the State 4-H Office, the designated authority.

*Revised by Karen Mansue.*

*Written by Keith G. Diem.*

## References

National 4-H Headquarters website – [www.national4-hheadquarters.gov](http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov)

***For more information on New Jersey 4-H, please visit [www.nj4h.rutgers.edu](http://www.nj4h.rutgers.edu).***

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## Creating 4-H Club By-Laws

Why does a 4-H club need by-laws? By having fair and written rules, the rights and privileges of all members can be clearly understood. Also, a copy of the club by-laws is needed to obtain the required club charter. The following is a suggested format for 4-H club by-laws. Some sections may be adapted to meet local conditions. Be sure to send a copy of your club’s approved by-laws to your county 4-H office. Include in the by-laws the date it was approved as well as the date it was most recently revised.

### Suggested Format

By-Laws for the           (4-H Club Name)          , \_\_\_\_\_ County, New Jersey

#### ARTICLE I – Name/Identity

##### Section 1 – Name

The name of this organization shall be \_\_\_\_\_ (4-H Club Name) \_\_\_\_\_.

##### Section 2 – Motto

The club motto shall be “To Make the Best Better”.

##### Section 3 – Emblem



The club emblem shall be a green four-leaf clover bearing a white “H” on each leaflet. Authorization to use the 4-H name and emblem is granted by Rutgers Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development, the unit of the NJ Agriculture Experiment Station responsible for oversight, guidance and support of this 4-H Club. Guidelines for use of the 4-H clover can be found on the National 4-H Headquarters website.

##### Section 4 – Pledge

The club pledge shall be:

*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.*



## ARTICLE II – Mission and Purpose

### Section 1 – Mission of 4-H

The Rutgers Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development program uses a learn-by-doing approach to enable youth to develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need to become competent, caring, and contributing citizens of the world. This mission is accomplished by using the knowledge and resources of the land-grant university system, along with the involvement of caring adults.

### Section 2 – Purpose of Club

The purpose of this club shall be to improve ourselves, our homes, our club, and our community.

Your club mission (if applicable)

### Section 3 – 4- H Compliance

This 4-H club will comply with all New Jersey 4-H policies under the guidance and support of 4-H faculty/staff.

## ARTICLE III – 4-H Charter and Nonprofit status

This 4-H Club agrees to follow all 4-H Charter guidelines. Once the 4-H Charter is granted, it will not expire. In the event that this 4-H Club falls below the basic 4-H requirements as outlined in the charter application, the charter will be revoked and this 4-H club will need to reapply for chartering and agree to meet the requirements.

With a 4-H Charter and IRS EIN, this 4-H club is certified to be tax exempt through the 4-H Group Exemption Number (GEN). Any funds received by the club for carrying out its purpose shall not accrue to the benefit of individuals but to the benefit of the 4-H program.

## ARTICLE IV – Membership

### Section 1 – Eligibility

Any boy or girl in this county, grades 4-13, may become a member of this club by applying for membership in at least one of the approved club projects and by agreeing to live up to the standards set by the club. Youth grades K-3, may be 4-H Cloverbud members. (However, the size of the club may be limited due to space limitations or the leader's available time or ability to accommodate more members.)

4-H Youth Development programs are offered to all youth, grades K-13, on a grade appropriate basis, without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. All possible efforts will be made to include rather than exclude youth in events conducted by the 4-H Youth Development program.

### Section 2 – Responsibility

Each member must attend at least 70 percent of the meetings during the year. If a member is unable to attend a meeting due to a valid excuse (such as sickness or an important school or family event), the member must contact the club leader, secretary, or president in advance to be excused. Each member should also complete an approved club project and keep a project record book.

Additional or different membership requirements may be included here. However, the non-discrimination statement must be included exactly as printed in Section 1.



## ARTICLE V – Meetings

### Section 1 – Dates

The club shall meet regularly every \_\_\_\_\_ (day/week) at \_\_\_\_\_ (time) at \_\_\_\_\_ (the designated place).

Special meetings may be called by the president and 4-H leader as needed, with 10 days advance notice.

### Section 2 – Quorum

A simple majority (one half plus one) of members must be present to conduct official business of the club.

### Section 3 – Order of business

The following order of business shall be followed at regular club meetings: *(Adjust to your club's needs)*

1. Meeting called to order
2. Club rises, salutes the American flag with the Pledge of Allegiance and then recites the 4-H Pledge (to the 4-H flag)
3. Roll call
4. Minutes of last meeting
5. Treasurer's report
6. Report of committees
7. Old or unfinished business
8. New business
9. 4-H leader's report
10. Announcements
11. Adjournment
12. Educational program/project work
13. Recreation/refreshments

## ARTICLE VI – Committees

Standing and/or special committees will be created as needed. Members are expected to volunteer for committee assignments. The president has the authority to appoint committee chairs and committee members.

## ARTICLE VII – Officers

The officers of this club shall include: president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and reporter. Their duties shall be as follows:

- The president will preside at all meetings, uphold the by-laws, and adhere to parliamentary procedure. The president shall appoint committee chairs and members.
- The vice president shall preside over the club in the absence of the president. The vice president shall assist the president and serve as a link to all committees.



- The secretary shall record minutes of each meeting and report at the next meeting. The secretary will also keep attendance records and write club correspondence.
- The treasurer shall keep the club's financial records and report on the club's finances at each meeting. See Article IX.
- The reporter shall collect newspaper and county newsletter clippings, photos, etc. for a club scrapbook/bulletin board/history. The reporter writes club meeting reports and sends them to the county 4-H office, and also may write and send club news to local newspapers, radio stations, etc.

(A club may have more or fewer officers. In any case, duties of each one should be written and included in this article.)

## ARTICLE VIII – Election of Officers

The officers of this club shall be elected at the first regular meeting in \_\_\_\_\_ (month) \_\_\_\_\_. They shall hold office for one year. All active members are eligible to run for an office and to vote. Voting is by majority rule and done by secret ballot.

## ARTICLE IX – Fundraising and Treasury Guidelines and Policies

This 4-H Club will follow *NJ 4-H Treasuries* and *Fundraising* policies, as well as IRS and NJ Charitable Registration regulations as applicable. All bank accounts should operate under the club's EIN (not the leader's personal information or social security number) and must require two authorized signatures. The 4-H Club Treasury Annual Review form must be completed and provided to the county 4-H staff.

## ARTICLE X – Amendments

These by-laws may be amended at a regular meeting by a two-thirds vote cast by those in attendance, providing notice has been given at the previous meeting. Review of by-laws will take place at least every two years. If by-laws are revised, a copy should be provided to the county 4-H office.

## ARTICLE XI – Dissolution

If this 4-H Club disbands, the 4-H club leader must immediately notify the county 4-H staff. All assets shall be assigned to \_\_\_\_\_ County 4-H Program through the appropriate county 4-H advisory group, designated by the 4-H club and approved by county 4-H staff.

By-laws approved \_\_\_\_\_ (date) \_\_\_\_\_, revised \_\_\_\_\_ (date) \_\_\_\_\_

*Revised by Ginny Powell, Gloria Kraft, and Jennae Warner.  
Written by Keith G. Diem.*

**For more information on New Jersey 4-H, please visit [www.nj4h.rutgers.edu](http://www.nj4h.rutgers.edu).**

Cooperating Agencies: Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and County Boards of Chosen Freeholders. Rutgers Cooperative Extension, a unit of the Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, is an equal opportunity program provider and employer.



## **4-H Club Officers Make the Meeting**

Club officers who understand their role as leaders of the club can effectively conduct a successful 4-H club meeting. Club officers take pride in their jobs, take an active responsibility to conduct club business, and encourage all members to get involved in club activities.

As a leader, you can help club officers and committee chairs complete their jobs successfully. In order to assist them in this process:

- Be sure the officers understand the roles and responsibilities of their position.
- Guide them when necessary to make sure their jobs are completed.
- Allow them to do their jobs with minimal supervision.

### **How is 4-H Connected with the University?**

The president's role is to lead others to work for the good of the club. The president listens to everyone's ideas and decides when the group has agreed on an action. However, the president does not dictate.

#### **President:**

- Meets with the leader and the other officers to plan the order of business for each meeting, then communicates this information to club members.
- Presides at meetings. Refer to *How to Conduct an Effective Meeting*.
- Sees that the room is ready and that the meeting starts on time.
- Arranges for the vice president to preside if the president cannot be present.
- Delegates responsibilities by asking for volunteers and/or appoints committees with the help of the club leader, when necessary.
- Works with members and the club leader to plan a program for the year.
- Casts the deciding vote in case of a tie.



## Vice President

The vice president is the president's assistant.

The vice president:

- Presides at meetings when the president is absent.
- Serves in other roles in the club, such as chair of the program committee.
- Represents the club at other activities in the absence of the president.

## Secretary

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

The secretary:

- Keeps minutes of all club meetings – what is done, not said. Refer to *How to Conduct an Effective Meeting*.
- Maintains a complete list of all members and calls the roll.
- Reads letters to the club at meetings.
- Reminds members of special meetings – by email, phone, postcard, or personal contact. Makes sure each member knows when and where the next meeting will be held.
- Writes the club's correspondence, such as thank you letters and requests for information.
- Completes and sends *4-H Club Meeting Reports* to the county 4-H office.
- Turns a completed 4-H Secretary's Book over to the club leader at the end of the year.

## Treasurer

The treasurer is responsible for handling the club's money, in conjunction with the club leader.

The treasurer:

- Works with the club leader to receive and keep a record of money in the 4-H Treasurer's Book.
- Works with the club leader to deposit the money in a special club account.
- Works with the club leader to expend funds only when approved by the club. (Refer to *Guidelines to 4-H Fundraising and 4-H Club Treasuries*.)
- Completes the *4-H Club Treasury Annual Review* form with the club leader and sends it to the county 4-H office.



## Committees

On benefit from conducting work through the use of committees. Committees can help all members become actively involved in the club since it provides additional opportunities for members to serve the club. Committees can be created for a variety of purposes, such as:

- *Program Committee members* find speakers and special resources for club meetings and activities, in consultation with the club leader.
- *Membership Committee members* help recruit new members,volunteers, and leaders for their own or other clubs.
- *Community Service Committee members* talk with parents, members, and neighbors to identify community needs and present the ideas for service projects to the club.

## Additional Roles

Club historian and recreation leader are special job assignments for club members. Such duties should be written and shared with club members.

## Nominating and Electing Officers

Nominations and elections are important to club business and should be held annually, such as at the start of the new 4-H year. Be sure to inform club members about the election ahead of time, such as two months in advance, and explain how the election process will work. Members can then be thinking about who they may want to serve in a leadership position. Club members should also be informed of the duties of each office before considering running for or accepting an officer position. Club officers must be in fourth grade or above to serve in this role.

There are two ways to nominate officers:

- *From the Floor.* The first option is to have members nominate someone for an office during the election meeting. The member says, "I nominate \_\_\_\_\_ for the office of \_\_\_\_\_ ." It is helpful to know if a member is interested in a specific position before being nominated and/or to think about whether someone would be well-suited for the position.
- *The other option* is to have the president appoint a nominating committee. Nominating committee members then speak with interested members and ask them to run for office. The nominating committee chair presents its nominations to the club during a meeting. Other nominations can also be made from the floor.

When there are no other nominations, a member says, "I move to close the nominations." If the motion is seconded and passed, members then vote on the candidates, either individually or for the entire slate of officers.

Voting for officers is usually by ballot. It takes a majority vote – one vote over half – to be elected. For example, if there are 17 members a majority is 9.

Helping club officers gain the necessary skills to lead their 4-H club will enable club business and activities to be conducted efficiently and effectively.

*Revised by Sharon Kinsey.*

*Written by Judith S. Baillere.*

**Reference:** *Bulletin 609, Washington State University*





 *Did You Know...* 

National 4-H Congress was first held in 1922 in Chicago.

This was also the year that the first club charters were offered by USDA as each new 4-H club formed.

*For more information on New Jersey 4-H, please visit [www.nj4h.rutgers.edu](http://www.nj4h.rutgers.edu).*

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## ***How to Conduct an Effective 4-H Meeting***

### **Making a Difference**

As the adult leader, your guidance conducting meetings can have a life-long impact on youth members. Each member should have the opportunity to experience four essential elements of positive youth development:

- Master new skills while having fun.
- Make new friends and be a friend to others.
- Share responsibilities and serve others.
- Increase self-reliance and self-confidence.

### **Meet Frequently**

How many meetings are sufficient? This depends on the club, its members, and their projects. However, all clubs should meet at least once a month. Many clubs meet as often as once a week. Except for a major holiday month, or around county fair time, clubs should meet throughout the year.

### **Balance Work and Play**

Every meeting should include three components:

- *Business session* — The officers should run this part of the meeting, with leader guidance. See *4-H Club Meeting Agenda*.
- *Social interaction* — Plan an activity.
- *Educational program/project work* — This is generally guided by the leader. The program portion could be work on 4-H projects, a guest speaker, and/or public presentations given by members.

### **Select a Regular Meeting Day, Time, and Place**

A 4-H club needs to meet regularly at a designated place and time. Changing a meeting date to meet the whims of the group may help get more members to a meeting in the short run. However, in the long run, members may become confused about meeting dates. Irregular meetings can also make it difficult for new members to adapt to the club.

The best way to set an acceptable meeting schedule is for the club to vote and to abide by majority rule. This is generally done at the first (organizational) meeting when the club is established. The meeting schedule is included in a club's by-laws. After that, it can only be changed with a majority vote for change in by-laws. Obtaining parental support for the meeting schedule is helpful in maintaining member participation.



## The Order of a Business Meeting

4-H club officers conduct and lead a 4-H business meeting with guidance from you, the leader. Help officers to understand their jobs and write an agenda in advance. Refer to *4-H Club Officers Make the Meeting*.

Business meetings follow a specific procedure:

- Call to order when the meeting opens—(president)
- Pledge of allegiance, 4-H pledge, song, or other opening—(vice president)
- Roll call—(secretary)
- Reading of the minutes of the last meeting—(secretary)
- Treasurer’s report—(treasurer)
- Correspondence—(secretary)
- Reports of committees
- Old or unfinished business left over from the last meeting—(president)
- New business—(president)
- Next meeting date
- Adjournment when the business meeting is over

## Minutes of a Meeting

It is the secretary’s job to keep the minutes of each meeting. The minutes should be a record of what is done, not what is said. They should contain:

- Date and place of meeting
- Names of members and visitors present
- Approval of previous minutes
- All reports and what was done about them
- All motions with the name of the person who made them and whether the motion was carried or lost
- The time the meeting was adjourned
- Any programs, refreshments, or recreation that happened after the meeting



## Making and Voting on Motions

A member who wants the club to vote on something makes a motion. That member raises one hand, or stands, and waits to be recognized. After being recognized by the president, the member says, "I move that..."

Another member says, "I second the motion." This means that at least one other member thinks the club should consider it. (If the motion is not seconded, it is dropped.)

The president then asks for discussion. When discussion stops, the president asks, "Are you ready for the question?" If no one requests more discussion, the club is ready to vote.

The president states the motion so everyone can hear it. The members vote when the president says, "All in favor say 'Aye,'" and, "All opposed say 'Nay.'"

The motion is passed if more members vote "Aye" than "Nay." If the president is in doubt about the vote, he or she should ask for a show of hands or a standing vote.

The president then says, "The motion is carried," or "The motion is lost," according to the vote.

## Ways to Vote

- *Voice Vote* – The president says "All in favor of the motion say 'Aye.'" "All opposed say, 'Nay.'"
- *Standing Vote* – The members stand so their votes can be counted.
- *Show of Hands* – The members raise their hands so the president can count their votes.
- *Ballot* – The president and helpers hand out blank slips of paper so the members can write down their vote.
- *Roll Call* – Members vote, one at a time, as their names are called.
- *Honor System* – All members close their eyes and vote by raising one hand. Leader and president count votes.

## Sample 4-H Club Meeting

**President:** *Will the meeting please come to order? John Jones will lead us in the pledge of allegiance and Maria Martinez will lead us in the 4-H pledge.*

**Member John Jones:** *Let's all stand and say the pledge of allegiance.*

**Members:** (vice president leads) *I pledge allegiance...*

**Member Maria Martinez:** *Let's all say the 4-H pledge.*

**Members:** (vice president leads) *I pledge my head...*

**President:** *The secretary will call the roll.*

**Secretary:** *Today we will answer the roll by telling what we did on our project last week.*

(There are many different ways of answering the roll, which you place in the 4-H secretary's book.)



**Member Nancy Tate:** *I dyed different kinds of cloth and put the samples in my record book.*

**Member Ken Washington:** *I taught my dog to heel.*

**Member Rick Less:** *I set out some tomato plants in my garden.*

**Other Members:** (Tell what they did.)

**President:** *Will the secretary read the minutes of the last meeting?*

**Secretary:** *The meeting was called to order by...*

**President:** *Are there any additions or corrections to the minutes? (Pause.) If not, they stand approved as read.*

**President:** *Will the treasurer please present the financial report?*

**Treasurer:** reports money received, money paid out, and the balance on hand

**President:** *Are there any questions? If not, the treasurer's report is accepted.*

**President:** *Has any correspondence been received?*

**Secretary:** reads aloud any letters, cards, or other correspondence addressed to the club

**President:** *Will the committee chairs please present their reports?*

**Committee:** report activities of the committee since the previous club meeting

After each report, the president asks if there are any questions. If there are no questions, the president says, "The report is accepted as presented." If there are questions and if the report needs something done about it, the president asks for a motion (a request that something be done).

Each motion must be seconded, discussed, and voted on before another motion can be made.

**President:** *Is there any unfinished business? (Business left from the last meeting can be discussed at this time.) Is there any new business? (Club members discuss new business—future plans for club activities, things to be done before the next meeting, etc.) Are there any announcements? (Club members or leaders make announcements). If there is no further business, is there a motion to adjourn?*

**Member:** *I move that the business meeting be adjourned.*

**Member:** *I second the motion.*

**President:** *All those in favor of the motion say "Aye." Those opposed say "Nay." The motion is passed (if more members vote "Aye" than "Nay"). The business meeting is adjourned.*

## Rules of Brainstorming

Vary the kinds of things done throughout the year. Encourage officer/member involvement. Help them decide what they want to do most. As an adult leader, your primary duty is to guide the members in setting goals and following through with their action plan.



## Decision Making by Consensus

The way a group makes decisions greatly influences how people feel about the group and how well the group members support a decision.

If the decision made by the group is liked by the members, they feel as though they have 'won'. If the members do not like the decision, they will feel as though they have 'lost'. A good decision for the group is one that is understood, carried out, and supported by its members.

The term consensus means that the entire group supports the decision. Consensus decision making is a cooperative team-effort. A process of selecting options that are understood, supported, and carried out by a group.

## How to Make a Decision by Consensus

1. Identify the problem, situation, or issue that requires a decision.
2. Brainstorm a list of alternatives. Record all ideas. The more ideas the better. No idea is to be judged, discussed, or rejected.
3. Test each alternative. What would happen if....? Choose a member to record the results of the testing. **Caution: Remind the 4-H youth that only the alternative solution is being evaluated, not the person who made the suggestion.** Change, rewrite, or discard the alternatives.
4. Take the list of rewritten and/or saved alternatives to the problem where everyone can see them. Use group discussion as the process for ranking the alternatives. If your group is very large, sub-divide into smaller groups so everyone will have an opportunity to say what they think. If more ideas are needed, brainstorm more solutions.
5. Make your decision. After the group has discussed the alternatives, they are ready to choose the preferred solution. The solution receiving the highest number of votes is the preferred decision. The decision should be written on newsprint or chalkboard or poster so everyone can see it.
6. Implement the decision. Decide who will do what? When? How? Where?
7. Evaluate the results of the group decision.



## Recreation/Creative Play

For 4-H'ers to feel a part of the group/team they need to:

- Feel they belong, are welcome, and needed.
- Share in planning and goal setting.
- Know that their ideas are heard.
- Feel that the group is doing something worthwhile.
- Share in the way the group will work toward common goals (rules).
- Know what is expected.
- See that progress is made.
- Have confidence and trust in the leader.

## Recreation/Creative Play

Recreation can be a highlight of your 4-H club meeting, depending on how you conduct it. Creative play is an opportunity for you and your club members to learn while having fun together.

## Goals for Fun

Remember, whatever the goal for playing, the main reason youth play games is ! So, be sure to put in their !

Having a goal for play will help you, the teen leader, or the game committee know what kind of game to choose to play.

Is your goal:

- To burn off excess energy?
- To work on developmental skills? (Example: problem solving skills.)
- To work on individual behavior skills? (Example: self-control; following directions.)
- To work on physical abilities? (Example: develop coordination.)
- To work on basic motor skills? (Example: running, jumping, balance, etc. This goal will apply to almost any game you choose for younger members.)



## Play Hard, Play Fair, Be Safe, Have Fun!

Keep your play on the , focus on cooperation.

- Set the limits of acceptable behavior.
- Encourage team work.
- Avoid games that eliminate people.
- Redesign favorite games that eliminate people to include more and more people.

## Cooperative Play

What is cooperative play anyway? It is any activity where the focus is on common characteristics. For instance, games that group people by birthdays, hair color, clothing color, etc. focus on our connections. This opens the door for everyone to see more subtle connections as the club continues to do things together.

## Getting and Holding Their Attention

Before you can lead youth, you need to have their attention.

- Maintain active listening through eye contact. Make sure you are the one facing the sun.
- Creative Sound: Use any mix of high, low, variable speed, or intonation. Examples: horseracing banter, whistling, whispering, different accent.
- Collaboration: Make a deal with 2 or 3 youth. They will start laughing, clapping, snapping their fingers, or stomping their feet. Everyone's attention will soon be on you.
- Rituals: Teach mini-games to use later whenever you need everyone's attention. Example: Hand signal used in football for time out, "Freeze" (stop where you are!) "Islands" (nobody touching anyone else.) "Dead Ants" (everyone gets on their back with feet and hands in the air). Have all the necessary equipment ready for the games you plan to play.

## Be Prepared!

Know the directions for the game. Explain the directions clearly. Get their attention.

## Stop While You Are Ahead

Stop the game while their enthusiasm is still high! Channel their enthusiasm to the next planned activity—another game, project activity, etc.





*Revised by Gloria Kraft.*

## **Adapted from original titles:**

*What Makes a Good 4-H Club Meeting?* by Keith G. Diem

*Running a Smooth 4-H Business Meeting* by Judith S. Baillere

*Decision Making by Consensus* by Betty Ann Smith

*Recreation/Creative Play* by Rose Mary Bergman and Betty Ann Smith

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# New Jersey 4-H *Head + Heart + Hands + Health* Leader Training Series



## ***Club Meeting Agenda***

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance and 4-H Pledge
3. Roll Call
4. Minutes of Previous Meeting – Read by Club Secretary
5. Treasurer’s Report
6. Correspondence – Read by the President or Secretary  
(Note: include important events from County Newsletter)
7. Committee Reports
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
8. Old Business
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
9. New Business
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
10. Next Meeting Date
11. Adjournment
12. Program (recreation, clinic, speaker, social event, presentation, etc).

*Written by Laura Bovitz.*



## *Did You Know...*



The National 4-H Pledge and 4-H Motto were approved by state leaders in 1927. And *my world* was officially added to the 4-H Pledge in 1973.

***For more information on New Jersey 4-H, please visit [www.nj4h.rutgers.edu](http://www.nj4h.rutgers.edu).***

Cooperating Agencies: Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and County Boards of Chosen Freeholders. Rutgers Cooperative Extension, a unit of the Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, is an equal opportunity program provider and employer.



# New Jersey 4-H *Head + Heart + Hands + Health* Leader Training Series



## 4-H Club Treasuries

### Obtaining a 4-H Club Treasury

A 4-H club or group treasury is both a privilege and a responsibility. Funds may be raised from club dues, fundraisers, and other sources. It is critical that all local, state, and federal tax regulations be followed. Refer to the *4-H Charter Policy* and the *Treasuries and Fundraising of 4-H Clubs and 4-H Affiliated Groups Policy*.

National 4-H Headquarters requires a 4-H Charter for any 4-H entity to: 1) use the 4-H Name and Emblem, and 2) be included under the National 4-H Group Exemption Number. Only the Director of Extension and the State 4-H Office can issue a charter and obtain federal tax exempt status. A "4-H entity" is defined as any 4-H club or group (advisory council/association). A 4-H Club or Group Charter Application is submitted through the County 4-H Office.

A Chartered 4-H Club or Affiliated 4-H Organization is eligible to apply for federal tax exempt status under the National 4-H Group Exemption Number (GEN) 2704 through the County 4-H Office. As a first step the Chartered 4-H Club or group must apply for an EIN (Employee Identification Number) by completing an SS-4 form with assistance from the County 4-H Office. Once a 4-H club or group receives the EIN, the County 4-H Office forwards this information to the State 4-H Office who then submits it to National 4-H Headquarters. National 4-H Headquarters certifies (through the IRS) the club to be included under the 4-H GEN (federal tax exempt status). The 4-H club or group will receive a Certification Letter directly from National 4-H Headquarters authorizing the club to receive tax deductible donations and grants from private and corporate donors under the 4-H nonprofit status.

### Tax Exempt Status – What you can and cannot do under the 4-H GEN

Federal 4-H Tax Exempt Status authorizes a 4-H club or group to receive tax deductible donations and grants from private and corporate donors (as applicable under the IRS code). A 4-H group is exempt from paying federal income tax on funds raised on behalf of 4-H. This tax exempt status DOES NOT exempt your group from any state or local taxes, such as hotel tax, property tax, sales tax, personal income tax, or other taxes. This policy reflects 2008 IRS regulations regarding National 4-H Group Exemption Number (GEN). Subsequent changes or additions to IRS regulations will supercede these policy statements.

New Jersey tax regulations are different. Refer to the New Jersey Charitable Registration and Investigation Act for details. In order to be exempt from paying NJ sales tax, 4-H clubs complete requirements for the ST-5 Exempt Organization Certificate.

### Purpose of the Club Treasury

A 4-H club should be concerned with money only to the extent that it is needed to provide supplies or cover expenses to meet the goals set by club members under the guidance of the leader. A club should not raise money just for the sake of raising money. Funds should be targeted for a specific goal and expended in the same 4-H year unless the club is saving for a long-term goal. The Annual Financial Review presented to the County 4-H Office should indicate a minimal balance remaining in the club bank account unless funds are being saved for a long term goal clearly described in the review.

All money raised by or donated to a club becomes the property of that club and not any individual in the club. All property of the club should be included in a written inventory and kept with the treasurer's permanent written records.



## How 4-H Clubs are Authorized to Raise Funds

No membership fees are required to join 4-H. However, clubs may decide to collect dues from members on a regular basis. Collecting club dues is optional and is decided by each club's membership. Members of the club should vote on the amount and how often dues are to be collected. A club may also decide to charge fees for a special activity. Any fees charged for a 4-H program or activity should only be used to cover or defray expenses for that specific program.

## Annual Club Financial Plans

At the beginning of each 4-H year, the club needs to develop a financial plan. This means that the club discusses what activities will require funds and how much will be required for each activity. The club should also discuss how those funds should be raised. The club members should vote to approve the financial plan. After the decision is made, the *4-H Club Financial Plan Form* should be completed and submitted to the 4-H office. Adult guidance is essential and parental support is always helpful.

## Planning Fundraising Efforts for the Year

See the information sheet, *Guidelines for 4-H Fundraising*. In general, funds must be raised for specific purposes. Fundraising just to have a big treasury is inappropriate and inconsistent with the *Treasuries and Fundraising of 4-H Clubs and 4-H Affiliated Groups Policy*.

## Role of Treasurer

While the adult leaders are held accountable for all funds collected and expended, they should guide, supervise, and direct youth members in the responsibility of the office of treasurer. Funds shall be collected by the elected club treasurer. 4-H Cloverbud members are not eligible to serve as officers. Responsibilities for maintaining the club bank account belong to the treasurer, depending on the age and abilities of that member. This includes making monthly deposits of any cash or checks on hand and monthly reconciliation of any bank account statements. The treasurer shall keep written records of the treasury and submit a detailed report (including any income and expenses) at each meeting. The *New Jersey 4-H Club Treasurer's Record Book* should be used as an official record of the 4-H club treasury.

## Club Bank Accounts

Any money owned by the club should be kept in a bank account, established under the club or group name and its EIN. Personal social security numbers are not required and should not be used on bank accounts. At least two signatures are required on the account. Ideally it should be the club treasurer and a club leader. If the bank does not accept a signature of a minor, the second signature should be that of co-leader or parent. Under no circumstance should the two signatures be from the same family.

## Annual Review of Treasury

Each club or group with a treasury must submit a completed *Annual Financial Review* (see *Treasurer's Record Book*) to the County 4-H Office by March 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. The treasury records and the bank account records must be 'reviewed' by a committee made up of at least two individuals NOT affiliated with the club.



## Tax Liability

Every 4-H organization with an EIN is required to file an Electronic Notice Form 990-N (ePostcard) with the IRS regardless if earnings are \$0 to \$25,000. Groups grossing more than \$25,000 are required to file Form 990. This annual electronic filing notice is the responsibility of the 4-H club leader and is due by May 15<sup>th</sup> of each year. It is strongly encouraged that County 4-H faculty/staff remind and assist 4-H groups in filing the 990 or the 990-N.

Failure to comply with this requirement is unlawful and can result in prosecution or fines as well as losing the 4-H Club Charter, loss of tax exempt status and the associated privilege of raising funds and having a bank account in the name of 4-H. Each year, National 4-H Headquarters will receive a list from the IRS containing all 4-H groups that filed. This list will be shared with the counties to verify accuracy.

## If Your Club Disbands

If your club disbands, the leader must immediately notify the county 4-H staff. All assets shall be assigned to the county 4-H program through the appropriate county 4-H advisory group, designated by the club and approved by county 4-H staff. Under no circumstances are 4-H funds or property transferred, divided, or distributed among individual members, parents, or adult leaders. This should be appropriately described in the club or group by-laws.

*Revised by Gloria Kraft and Ginny Powell.*

### **Adapted from original titles:**

*4-H Club Treasuries* by Ginny Powell

*Fund Raising and 4-H Club Treasuries* by Keith G. Diem

*Important Information on 4-H Treasuries* by T.C. Buchanan

### **References**

Official references for clubs and other groups involved in fund raising include:

New Jersey 4-H Policies - [nj4h.rutgers.edu/policies](http://nj4h.rutgers.edu/policies)

National 4-H Headquarters Policies and Regulations - [national4-hheadquarters.gov/library/4h\\_polregs.htm#factsheets](http://national4-hheadquarters.gov/library/4h_polregs.htm#factsheets)



## *Did You Know...*



National 4-H Headquarters—USDA is located within the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and has responsibility for granting authorization of the use of the 4-H name and emblem.

*For more information on New Jersey 4-H, please visit [www.nj4h.rutgers.edu](http://www.nj4h.rutgers.edu).*

Cooperating Agencies: Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and County Boards of Chosen Freeholders. Rutgers Cooperative Extension, a unit of the Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, is an equal opportunity program provider and employer.



# New Jersey 4-H *Head + Heart + Hands + Health* Leader Training Series



## ***Guidelines for 4-H Fundraising***

### **When is Fundraising Appropriate?**

See *4-H Club Treasuries*, including “Obtaining a 4-H Club Treasury” before attempting any 4-H fundraising. Your 4-H club or group must have a 4-H Charter, EIN (Employee Identification Number), and be certified to be part of the National 4-H Group Exemption Number (GEN) 2704 directly from National 4-H Headquarters. In doing so, this will authorize your club or group to receive tax deductible donations and grants from private and corporate donors under the 4-H nonprofit status. *Your club may not engage in fundraising or collection of dues until you have obtained all of the above.* Refer to the *4-H Charter Policy* and the *Treasuries and Fundraising of 4-H Clubs and 4-H Affiliated Groups Policy*.

### **When is Fundraising Appropriate?**

The purpose of fundraising is to support 4-H club goals and help all members participate in events that might not be affordable otherwise. In addition, it can be an effective way to increase teamwork, leadership skills, and financial literacy. Members should discuss and decide all fundraising issues under the guidance of club leaders. Since members’ parents are often needed to support the effort, it may be a good idea to include them in the discussion. Funds should be targeted for a specific goal and expended in the same 4-H year. Your County 4-H Office can make an exception to this policy if your club has a specific, long-term goal. Raising money should not be the club’s primary activity and is not a requirement for club success.

### **County-wide Fundraising**

Many 4-H programs have county-wide fundraisers to benefit the entire 4-H program in the county. Some counties need such fundraisers to maintain a 4-H center on fairgrounds, or to provide awards or special programs. Your club should fully support any county-wide fundraising efforts before initiating its own. Consider the fact that many county-wide fundraisers often share a portion of the profits with each club that participates, but it may also be a burden for 4-H families (and the neighborhood) to participate in excessive fundraising. It might even result in negative 4-H public relations. Communicate with the county 4-H staff regarding all fundraising plans.

### **Setting Goals**

Fundraising is a means to reach a specific goal. Such goals might be to help members go on a club field trip, purchase a 4-H/American flag set, sponsor a club recognition banquet, or fund a community service project. Whenever possible, however, people should “pay their own way.” Examples might include members buying their own club T-shirts or members bringing a dish to a pot-luck club dinner. Reserve *club* fundraisers for *club goals* rather than individual needs. An exception might be providing an “incentive” to members—by paying a portion of a member’s expense for 4-H summer camp or 4-H conferences. Whatever the goals for the fundraising event, the club should approve the goal and the event to be held. *Members* should work to carry out the club’s goals with the leader’s guidance.





## Start Small

Make sure your club fundraiser provides a learning experience and can be easily accomplished by the club. Start small and build on small successes. Fundraising can be a good way for members to learn organizational and business skills. It can also be fun. Consider whether to do fundraising as individuals (such as selling calendars to friends and family) or as a total club (bake sale, car wash, etc.) Consider doing a fundraiser that doesn't require a great investment in advance. The less money your club must invest, the less money it can lose if the fundraiser isn't successful. Good examples are bake sales, car washes, and service auctions (where members sell their services to clean garages, mow lawns, etc.) In any case, organize and publicize your event well.

## Safety

To ensure safety for 4-H'ers and leaders, no one should solicit door-to-door. Any fundraising activities should be under the direct adult supervision.

## Legal Issues

Make sure that fundraising activities meet the legal requirements of the local municipality, county, and state. Certain fundraisers (such as raffles, games of chance, yard sales, etc.) may require permits or may not be legal in certain municipalities. Before you spend too much time planning an event, you should check with the municipal office of the location where the fundraiser is to be held to make sure you are following the proper procedures.

## Informing the County 4-H Office

Using the official 4-H Name and Emblem is a privilege reserved for Chartered 4-H Clubs and affiliated groups such as advisory councils or leaders' associations. 4-H clubs must submit a *Fundraising Worksheet* to inform the County 4-H Office of fundraising plans in advance to avoid conflict with other 4-H fundraising efforts and program goals. If the 4-H staff determines there is a conflict with other efforts or program goals, or is not informed of the fundraising plans, he or she may choose to deny support or permission for the fundraiser. The county 4-H staff can also help by providing ideas and publicizing the event.

## Handling the Funds

All funds raised become part of the club's treasury and should be handled in accordance with the *4-H Charter Policy* and the *Treasuries and Fundraising of 4-H Clubs and 4-H Affiliated Groups Policy*. It is important to keep accurate records of the funds raised and expended and provide an Annual Financial Review to the County 4-H Office. Accurate records and notes will also help the club evaluate the success of the fundraiser and help in planning future events. Use the NJ 4-H publication *New Jersey 4-H Club Treasurer's Record Book* as the official record of the 4-H club treasury.

## Fundraising Success

Your club's fundraising effort can be successful if all members work together toward common, agreed upon goals. Members will feel success if they take an active part in the entire process of planning and implementing the fundraiser. They should see and reap the benefits of the money they worked to raise. Be realistic, have a plan for the money raised, and have fun!



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National 4-H Headquarters Policies and Regulations - [national4-hheadquarters.gov/library/4h\\_polregs.htm#factsheets](http://national4-hheadquarters.gov/library/4h_polregs.htm#factsheets)



## *Did You Know...*



In 1945 Congress passed the Bankhead-Flanagan Act which recognized 4-H as 1 of 9 Extension responsibilities and provided additional support.

*For more information on New Jersey 4-H, please visit [www.nj4h.rutgers.edu](http://www.nj4h.rutgers.edu).*

Cooperating Agencies: Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and County Boards of Chosen Freeholders. Rutgers Cooperative Extension, a unit of the Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, is an equal opportunity program provider and employer.