



COUNTY 4-H PROGRAM STRUCTURES

Revised December 2004

4-H Youth Development programming in Wisconsin has a dual focus – providing educational programs for youth and youth development leadership for communities. The structure of a county 4-H program will vary from county to county. In fact, there are probably as many different structures as there are flavors of gourmet jelly beans! However, there are some elements that should be consistent no matter what the overall structure may look like.

4-H Youth Development Agent/Educator:

The 4-H Youth Development agent/educator is charged with overall leadership and oversight for the UW-Extension 4-H youth development programs in the county. This includes guidance and support for the 4-H community club program, 4-H outreach programs, and serving as a community leader in youth development.

4-H Leaders Organization:

This countywide organization consists of all volunteer leaders completing the Youth Protection program. Active involvement of youth volunteers is encouraged. Meeting frequency varies from monthly to annually. Meeting efficiency is encouraged out of respect for time demands for active volunteers. The 4-H leaders organization is accountable to Cooperative Extension for their activities and finances. Their continuing existence is dependent upon Cooperative Extension's authorization and oversight.

Executive Board or Board of Directors:

Members are elected from the leaders organization to serve on the executive board or board of directors. The role of the executive board or board of directors varies from county to county. The board usually consists of elected officers and several district representatives or members at-large. The executive board or board of directors is accountable to the organization membership.

Expansion and Review Committee:

A committee that is reflective of the population of the county. Committee membership should include a mix of individuals currently participating in 4-H Youth Development programs and representatives from the community. The committee contributes to programming by assisting the extension staff in outlining a positive action plan to meet nondiscrimination standards and address the needs and interests of minority populations.

Program Committees:

Committees deal with projects, activities and organizational support. Committees that exist to support the work of the leaders organization, such as a food stand committee, are accountable to the organization. Other committees which support the work of the 4-H Youth Development program in the county are accountable to the agent/educator.

4-H Clubs, Project Groups, After-School Clubs:

4-H groups of all types are best served by having avenues of communication with the leaders organization. All groups using the 4-H name and emblem are accountable to Cooperative Extension for their activities and finances. Their continuing existence is dependent upon Cooperative Extension's authorization and oversight.

Delivery Modes/Participation in 4-H Youth Development Programming

Youth can participate in 4-H Youth Development programming through a variety of types of activities and programs. Examples include:

- **Youth members of organized 4-H clubs**

An organized group of youth, led by an adult, with a planned program that is carried on throughout all or most of the year. 4-H clubs may meet in any location and typically have elected officers and a set of rules approved by the membership to govern the club.

1a. Community clubs typically meet in the evenings or on weekends and offer self-chosen multiple learning experiences and activities.

1b. In-school clubs meet during school hours, but have officers and planned activities beyond school enrichment.

1c. 4-H after-school clubs are organized within child care settings. They have officers and planned activities.

1d. Military 4-H clubs are organized by the Armed Forces, often on military installations, and principally for military dependents.

- **Youth participating in 4-H special interest/short-term programs**

Groups of youth meeting for a specific learning experience that involves direct teaching by extension staff or trained volunteers, including teachers. Program is not part of school curriculum and not restricted to members of 4-H clubs. Examples of this type of participation includes youth who enroll in tractor safety, summer nutrition programs, and project groups that meet for short-term educational experiences. Youth may also participate in project or activity related educational programs.

- **Youth participating in 4-H camping programs**

Youth taking part in an Extension-planned educational experience of group living in the out-of-doors.

3a. Overnight camping includes being away from home at least one night (resident, primitive, or travel camping) and is not restricted to members of organized 4-H clubs.

3b. Day camping consists of multiple-day programs, with youth returning home each evening.

- **Youth participating in 4-H school enrichment programs**

Groups of youth receiving a sequence of learning experiences in cooperation with school officials during school hours to support school curriculum. Involves direct teaching by extension staff or trained volunteers, including teachers. Adventures in Dairyland is an example of a school enrichment program.

- **Youth participating in 4-H individual study/mentoring/family learning programs**

A county option for 4-H programming is to allow for individual family enrollment, where learning occurs independent of a formal group setting and where learning is self-directed, usually with limited adult involvement except for parents or mentor.

- **Youth participating in school-aged child care educational programs**

Educational programs offered to youth outside of school hours, usually in a school or other community center and incorporating 4-H curricula. The primary purpose is to provide care for youth while parents are working or unavailable.

- **Youth participating in instructional TV/video programs**

Youth offered learning experiences through extension via broadcast or closed-circuit television, including satellite transmission or videotape replays of such series.



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