

Questions About 4-H

1. What is 4-H? 4-H is a volunteer-led organization that reaches boys and girls through small groups called clubs and sometimes in classrooms. 4-H members decide for themselves which of more than 40 projects they want to learn more about. Most projects use hands-on learning experiences to teach subject matter and life skills, such as cooperation, leadership and decision making-skills that can be applied over and over for a lifetime.

2. Who can join 4-H? 4-H is for boys and girls up through age 18. It is open to everyone, regardless of race, religion, color, disability, gender or place of residence.

3. Who provides leadership for 4-H? 4-H is sponsored in Wisconsin by the Cooperative Extension Service of University of Wisconsin-Extension. Nationally, it is part of the Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Local leadership is provided by 4-H youth development agents in the county offices of the Cooperative Extension Service, which is supported financially by county, state, and federal tax dollars.

4. What do the "H's" stand for? Head, heart, hands, and health. This is the 4-H pledge:

I pledge

My head to clearer thinking

My heart to greater loyalty

My hands to larger service

My health to better living

For my club, my community, my country, and my world.

5. What is the 4-H emblem? A green four-leaf clover with a white "H" on each clover leaf.

Questions About 4-H Groups

1. Why do young people like 4-H? They have fun with friends at meetings, social activities, camps, fairs, and on tours and trips. They learn to do interesting things such as: take care of animals, and plants, redecorate their rooms, fix their bikes, take pictures, practice cooking, and collect rocks. And they help others to learn more about their 4-H project, provide leadership to younger kids, and learn about themselves.

2. How do you join? Call your county UW-Extension office or a local 4-H leader (if you know one) 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. The yellow pages of your telephone book probably list a number for 4-H under "Government-County."

3. 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.

4. 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 invite the 4-H youth development agent or an experienced 4-H leader.) Discuss when, where, and how often the group will meet.

5. Should 4-H clubs have dues? It depends on their need for money. There are no national 4-H dues. Though there is a \$1.00 annual fee which is collected to support the Wisconsin 4-H Foundation. If a club wants money for some activities, it usually charges dues or conducts money-making activities. Dues can not be used as a barrier to keep someone from joining 4-H.

6. What about officers? 4-H clubs may have officers and whatever committees they need to conduct their business. 4-H has instructional materials available for presidents, vice presidents, secretaries, treasurers, news reporters, recreation leaders, and song leaders. The club may have any number of 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.

7. Who names a club? The members of the club do - - with guidance from their leader and 4-H youth development agent.

8. How often do 4-H clubs meet? Some clubs meet every month year round and others meet every week for a month or two. This depends on the group and what it wants to do. 4-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 with your county Extension office about those kinds of deadlines.

9. Where do 4-H clubs meet? Any place is acceptable if it is large enough and is convenient for the members of the group. Some clubs meet in leaders' or members' homes. Some meet in a central place, such as a school, church or community room.

10. How big should a club be? This depends on the age of the members, the space available for their meetings, and the leadership available. The ideal club is big enough to have fun together, but small enough for everybody to feel a part of

the group. The average club in Wisconsin has 10 to 20 members and two or three leaders.

Questions About 4-H Leaders

1. What is a 4-H leader? An adult who works voluntarily with a group of 4-H members.

2. Are there different kinds of leader? Yes. Some adults teach members how to do things and are called "project leaders." They usually have a special interest or skill, such as photography, clothing or gardening. Adults who help a group get organized and run its meetings are called "organizational leaders." Can the same person be a project and an organizational leader? Sure, if they have the time and interest. Sometimes big clubs divide these jobs and have several project leaders and youth leaders to meet all the interests of 4-H members.

3. Who are youth leaders? Youth leaders are older 4-H members who develop skills in working with others. These teens assist the club leader and members with project work, club program and activities, and county events.

4. How many leaders should a 4-H club have? That depends on the size of the club and the ages of its members. 4-H recommends that there be a minimum of two leaders per club. Clubs that have an enrollment of 40 or more members should have at least three to five leaders to share the workload and give individual attention to members.

5. Where would I learn how to be a 4-H leader? Your main help would be your county's UW-Extension office. The 4-H youth development agent will discuss with you your interest in working with you, your previous experience, and the resources available to you. All volunteers complete application and enrollment forms and participate in an orientation. Materials you would need to organize a 4-H club would be given to you or you would be matched up with a club leader in your neighborhood or county.

Questions About 4-H Projects

1. What are 4-H projects? A 4-H project is a series of learning experiences for 4-H members. More than 40 projects are available from the Cooperative Extension Service of UW-Extension. Most projects have manuals to assist the 4-H'er with his or her project. The most popular projects are dairy, visual and theatre arts, environmental education, foods and nutrition, clothing, and photography.

2. What is a 4-H project manual? A project manual contains help and direction needed to complete the project. Some projects have a manual for each level. Others have one manual which the member uses throughout her or his 4-H career. A manual may range from two to 100 pages and may cost from 50 cents to \$10.00.

3. What does a 4-H project cost? It varies. A member enrolled in visual arts might use supplies from around the house to practice the skills he or she is learning and have no additional expense. A member who buys and keeps a saddle horse might invest hundreds of dollars. Members should consider cost as they select a project. It should be realistic to the family situation.

4. Are 4-H members expected to do their own project work? Yes - - with help. 4-H is a "learn by doing" program. Leaders, youth leaders, and parents may tell or show a member how, but members are expected to learn how to do things themselves. One of the principles of 4-H is that allowing a youth to learn by doing builds self-worth.

5. What is an exhibit? An exhibit is an object or display designed to help a young person show what she or he has accomplished. Ideally, it motivates a youth to learn and to have fun in a 4-H project. An exhibit is not an end in itself, nor does it measure all the learning that takes place from completing a project.

6. Are projects done individually or as a group? Both. Some projects like fishing or biking are more fun when done as a group. Others like making a dress or finishing a drawing may be done individually by each member of the group.

Questions About 4-H Meetings

1. What do 4-H clubs do at meetings? 4-H clubs usually do five general kinds of things: project work, conduct business meetings, recreation or social activities, community service work, and special interest programs.

2. Do they do all of those things at one meeting? Sometimes they have a short business meeting, work on their projects for awhile, then have recreation. Sometimes the whole meeting is devoted to one thing. For example, everyone brings his or her dog and practices obedience training, or they elect officers and plan the club program, or they have a pizza-making party or tour a local factory.

3. 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, ideas come from everybody and a committee puts together a program.

4. When do clubs meet and how long do meetings last? This depends on the group. Many clubs meet for an hour or two after school, in the evening or on

Saturday. The most important thing is to have a regular time to get together, one that members and their families can remember.

Questions About 4-H Parents

1. *What should parents know about 4-H leaders?* Be sure they realize that leaders are volunteers who are not being paid. Parents should attend a 4-H meeting or volunteer to hold meetings in their homes so they can see how leaders work with clubs.

2. *How do you get parents to help?* Ask them. Be specific about jobs the club needs help with. Think positively. People who expect help usually get it. Offer a choice of jobs. People can provide different amounts of time and abilities. Ask the young people to ask their parents to help.

3. *As a 4-H parent, how can I help my child?* Counsel with your son or daughter to select 4-H projects that are interesting and can be conveniently financed. Show your interest and enthusiasm after the projects have been selected. Read over the project manual with your child and help her or him understand what to do, when to do it, and how to carry out different phases of the project. Assist your daughter or son with project work, but don't do the job for her or him. Your job is to teach, not to control. Learn to give increased freedom as your child develops.