



4-H FAQs¹

Marilyn N. Norman and Joy C. Jordan²

Q: What is 4-H?

A: 4-H is an informal, practical educational program for youth. It is the youth development program of Florida Cooperative Extension, a part of the University of Florida IFAS. 4-H is where there's fun in learning and learning in fun!

Q: What is the mission of 4-H?

A: The Florida 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.

Q: Isn't 4-H just for kids who live on farms?

A: No! 4-H is for all youth, wherever they live – on farms, in suburbs, in cities. 4-H serves youth from all backgrounds and interests. It reaches both boys and girls through 4-H clubs, special-interest groups and short-term projects, school-age child care, individual & family learning & mentoring, camping, and school enrichment. Most 4-H members are from towns and cities and they participate in contemporary projects such as bicycle care and safety, consumer education, aerospace and model rocketry, public speaking, and animal sciences. 4-H offers membership without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, gender, disability, or handicap.

Q: What is a 4-H club?

A: Clubs are the foundation of the 4-H program. A 4-H club is a group of five or more youngsters guided by one or more adult volunteer leaders. A club can be any size—from a small group of kids from one neighborhood to a larger club consisting of youth from all over the county.



Q: What happens in a 4-H club?

A: A 4-H Club usually concentrates on one or more projects (such as gardening, woodworking, small animals, food and nutrition, livestock, photography, etc.) based on youth interests. 4-H members have many opportunities: building leadership by electing officers, conducting their own business meetings, working together on community service activities; meeting new friends; and most important, having lots of fun.

Q: What age must you be to join 4-H?

A: Youth, ages 5-18 or in grades K-12, can be 4-H club members and enroll in many different 4-H projects. Youth, grades K-2, can be 4-H Cloverbud members. 4-H Cloverbuds is a noncompetitive learning experience. Usually, Cloverbud members are in separate clubs where they sample a variety of 4-H projects. Older 4-H members also have special opportunities, such as serving on a countywide 4-H teen council.

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Q: How did 4-H originate?

A: 4-H clubs were first known as corn clubs for boys and canning clubs for girls, organized early in this century by public school educators who wanted to broaden the knowledge and experience of their students. 4-H in Florida began in 1909 in several counties in north Florida. 4-H became an official part of the Cooperative Extension Service, along with agriculture and home economics, at about the time Cooperative Extension was officially established by the US Congress in 1914. The term “4-H Club” first appeared in a federal document in 1918, and by the mid- 1920s, 4-H was well on its way to becoming a significant national program for youth. 4-H is an American idea that has spread around the world. Throughout its long history, 4-H has constantly adapted to the ever-changing needs and interests of youth.

Q: Does it cost money to join 4-H?

A: In some counties/clubs there may be a fee to cover curriculum materials. Uniforms are not required. Most 4-H project information, activities, and events are available at cost, which is usually minimal. Each club chooses whether to charge dues.

Q: Where does 4-H get its funding?

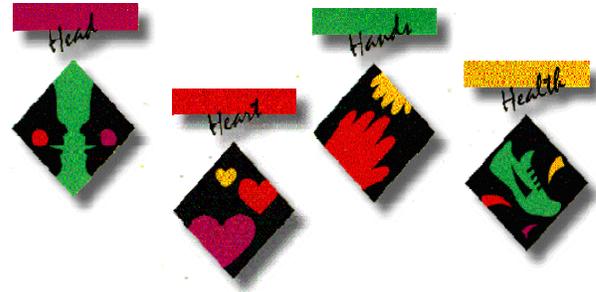
A: Florida Cooperative Extension, of which 4-H is a part, receives funds from a cooperative partnership of three levels of government: federal (via the Science and Education Administration of the US Department of Agriculture), state (via the University of Florida), and county (through the county Board of Commissioners). 4-H also receives support from private sources.

Q: Who “runs” the 4-H program?

A: Volunteers are the key to providing 4-H programs for youth. Capable, interested adult volunteers are always needed to lead clubs and to assist with 4-H activities. Orientation and training is provided, so no previous experience is necessary. 4-H volunteers are supported by a professional staff, including a county 4-H agent who is a faculty member of the University of Florida. The county 4-H agent is responsible for the countywide 4-H program and may also have state and national responsibilities. There are various county 4-H support and advisory groups made up of interested adult volunteers. State and national 4-H personnel assist county 4-H professionals.

Q: What do the four ‘H’s on the 4-H emblem stand for?

A: The 4-H emblem is a green four-leaf clover with a white ‘H’ on each leaflet, symbolizing Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. The 4-H emblem was protected by an Act of Congress in 1924.

**Q: What is the 4-H Pledge?**

A: At 4-H club meetings and other 4-H events, 4-H members recite the Pledge of Allegiance and this 4-H Pledge:

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.

Q: What is the 4-H motto?

A: “To Make the Best Better.”

**Q: What is the 4-H slogan?**

A: “Learn by Doing.”

Q: Where are 4-H programs found?

A: 4-H programs are conducted in 3,150 counties of the United States, and also in the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and The Virgin Islands. In addition, more than 80 countries around the world have youth programs similar to 4-H, with an overall enrollment of about 10 million young people. 4-H is also conducted and available to youth at all the U.S. Army and Air Force Installations around the world.

Q: *Is 4-H in my county?*

A: Yes! 4-H is in every county in the state. In Florida, thousands of members are in hundreds of local 4-H clubs. Thousands more are involved in 4-H through school enrichment, short-term programs, and camping. In addition, thousands of adults volunteer their time to assist with the 4-H program. Families and individuals can become part of 4-H by contacting the county 4-H office.

Q: *How can I find out more about 4-H in my county?*

A: Contact the 4-H staff in the Florida Extension office in the county of your residence. Florida Cooperative Extension (or 4-H) may be listed in the white pages of your phone book, or may appear under "County Government." If not, check the yellow pages under "Clubs" and "Youth Organizations and Centers." Also visit the UF 4-H Website at www.florida4H.org, or call the State 4-H Office at UF IFAS (352-846-0996) to obtain the phone number and address of the county 4-H office.



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