

# CITRUS COUNTY

## 4-H



# 2024-2025 HANDBOOK

**UF** IFAS Extension  
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA



Citrus County 4-H





Citrus County 4-H Youth Development Program  
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[Citrus County 4-H webpage](#)

The Florida 4-H Youth Development Program is committed to providing the most impactful, educational, and engaging 4-H experiences for young people in our community, ensuring they have access to positive youth development. In Citrus County, 4-H is a joint effort of local county government, the University of Florida-Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS), and the United States Department of Agriculture. 4-H is a community of young people across America learning and practicing leadership, citizenship and life skills.

This handbook serves as an introduction to the Citrus County 4-H program. Inside you can read about how to enroll (pg. 4), policies (pgs. 5 and 6), awards (pg. 7), scholarships (pg. 8) and many of the great events and activities (pg. 9) offered in Citrus County. Required forms/documents may be requested from the Citrus County Extension Office or by visiting [Citrus County 4-H webpage](#).

Toni and I look forward to an accomplished year. We are continuously planning and organizing opportunities for engaging youth in our community. If you have ideas to share or see a need that we can address, then please let us know.

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4-H and all programs and related activities sponsored for, or assisted by, the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences are open to all persons with non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations. 4-H is a community of young people across America learning leadership, citizenship and life skills. As one of our nation's oldest, yet most current organizations, 4-H is reaching millions of young people with positive youth development opportunities.



# What every 4-H member should know ...



## *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.

*Members stand when saying the pledge. The following actions accompany the recitation of the pledge:*

### Spoken Words

*My HEAD to clearer thinking,*

*My HEART to greater loyalty,*

*My HANDS to larger service,*

*My HEALTH to better living...*

### Accompanying Actions

*Raise right hand to forehead*

*Move the right hand over heart*

*Arms at side, extend forearms with palms outward*

*Arms at side (through completion of pledge)*

## *The 4-H Creed*

I believe in 4-H club work for the opportunity it gives me to become a useful citizen.

I believe in the training of my **Head** for the power it will give me to think, plan, and reason.

I believe in the training of my **Heart** for the nobleness it will give me to be kind, sympathetic, and true.

I believe in the training of my **Hands** for the ability it will give me to be helpful, skillful and useful.

I believe in the training of my **Health** for the strength it will give me to enjoy life, resist disease, and work efficiently.

I believe in my country, my state, my community and in my responsibility for their development.

In all these things I believe, and am willing to dedicate my efforts to their fulfillment.

## *The 4-H Motto*

To Make the Best Better

## *The 4-H Emblem*

The 4-H emblem is a green, four-leaved clover with a white "H" on each clover leaf. The use of the name and emblem gives individual members a sense of belonging to an organization that reaches beyond their immediate area.

## 4-H Name and Emblem

The Secretary of Agriculture for the United States Department of Agriculture holds the 4-H name and emblem in trust for the educational and character building purposes of the 4-H program.

It is not permissible to super-impose any letter, design, or object on the 4-H emblem, or to materially alter its intended shape.

The 4-H name and emblem may be used by authorized representatives for the educational needs and interests of youth enrolled in 4-H.

Any use of the 4-H name and emblem is discouraged if it exploits the 4-H program, its volunteer leaders or youth participants or the United States Department of Agriculture, Land Grant Colleges, Cooperative Extension Service, or their employees.

Advertisements, news releases, publication in any form, visuals and audio visuals or displays in any form must not include actual or implied testimonials or endorsements of business firms, commercial products or services. Statements that a product is used or preferred to the exclusion of similar products are not permitted.

### Acceptable



### Unacceptable



It is unacceptable to put anything over the emblem.

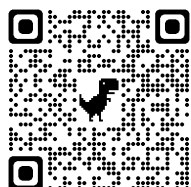
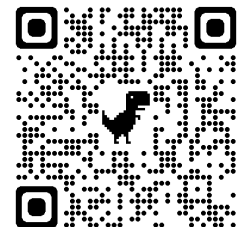


**4-H Online**-Where to register for 4-H clubs and events

[4honline.com](http://4honline.com)

### Helpful Websites

State-wide resources for youth and volunteers plus information on upcoming events around the state: [Florida 4-H](#)



4-H has programs nationally, learn more about priorities, research and resources for youth and volunteers: [National 4-H](#)



# 4-H Membership



## 4-H Year

The official 4-H year runs from September 1st of the current year to August 31st of the following year.

## Enrollment

Membership in 4-H cannot be prohibited on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, creed, economic status or geographic location within Citrus County.

Enroll in 4-H at [4honline.com](http://4honline.com). Enrollment is an annual requirement. If you do not have access to the internet, please come to the 4-H office to complete the online registration. Enrollment and membership fee payment must be complete before youth are eligible to participate in 4-H activities.

New 4-H clubs may be organized throughout the year. Youth wanting to participate in county, district or state competition will need to be enrolled in the 4-H program at least 30 days before the competition. Participation in district or state level events may require significant progress in a record book.

However, selected projects or programs do have enrollment restrictions.

Leaders and members must reside in Citrus County, unless approved by the 4-H agent from their county of residence. 4-H members and leaders may only be enrolled in one county's 4-H program, unless a waiver is granted by the county 4-H agent. 4-H members who move to Citrus County and have been active 4-H members with their previous county during the current 4-H year, may enroll at any time during the 4-H year by registering in 4-H Online.

Club leaders have the right to limit the size of their 4-H club. It is expected that 4-H youth will contact their 4-H leader if they are unable to attend a monthly club meeting or if they decide to leave the club. Active club membership and eligibility is determined by attendance at club and county meetings/events.

## Dual Club Enrollment

Some youth enjoy participating in more than one 4-H club. This is called "dual club enrollment". In order for a youth to have dual club enrollment, the following must take place:

- Have approval from second club leader to join their club.
- Attend both club's meetings and meet membership requirements for both clubs.
- Actively participate in more than one club's events and activities.
- Must be enrolled in both clubs via the 4-H Online system.

A 4-H member is NOT dual enrolled if they participate in a special activity sponsored by a club. Keep in mind that a dual enrolled 4-H member can only represent one club on County Council.

## 4-H Age Divisions

Membership age of youth participation is determined by the youth's age as of September 1 of the current program year (September 1 – August 31). The minimum age of a 4-H member is 5 years old and the maximum age for a 4-H member is 18 years old, or completion of high school, whichever comes first.

**Clover bud** 4-H members are five to seven (5-7) year old youth as of September 1st of the current 4-H year.

- Clover buds cannot be enrolled in any large animal project and are ineligible to *compete* in competitive events; however they are welcome to *participate* in some competitive events and are recognized for their participation.
- Age and developmentally appropriate curricula are used targeting the specific needs and abilities of 5-7 year-olds. Learning in the group setting is the primary method for involving 5-7 year-olds in 4-H. Individualized projects are not appropriate methods for most 5-7 year-olds due to limited reading and other self-management skills.
- Dual participation of child and parent or guardian is encouraged to build a family involvement pattern that will be maintained as children become older.
- Animal projects for 5-7 year-olds are limited to “lap” animals only. Therefore, companion rather than production animal projects will be the focus of 4-H animal experiences for this age group. This policy does not prohibit 5-7 year-olds from learning about large animals through attendance at meetings or through field trips. They cannot participate, however, in 4-H activities that bring them in contact with large animals due to safety and insurance coverage considerations. NOTE: Families (parents or guardians) assume all risk and responsibility of young children if assisting 4-H siblings/ friends with large animals.
- Motorized vehicle and shooting sports 4-H programs do not permit the participation of 5-7 year-olds. Again, safety and insurance coverage considerations are the reasons for this program limitation.
- Clover buds are not eligible to participate in residential camping programs.

**Junior** 4-H members are eight to ten (8-10) year old youth as of September 1st of the current 4-H year.

**Intermediate** 4-H members are eleven to thirteen (11-13) year old youth as of September 1st of the current 4-H year. As available, intermediate age youth are encouraged to participate in leadership opportunities beyond the 4-H club level, including county, district, state and national 4-H leadership and citizenship opportunities.

**Senior** 4-H members are fourteen to eighteen (14-18) year old youth as of September 1st of the current 4-H year. Senior age youth are encouraged to participate in leadership opportunities beyond the 4-H club level. Senior 4-H youth are eligible to take part in a variety of county, district, state and national 4-H leadership and citizenship opportunities.



# 4-H Clubs



## We are **ALL** Role Models

Youth, parents and volunteers are expected to treat others in a courteous, respectful manner demonstrating the appropriate behaviors of a positive role model for both youth and adults. It is expected that all 4-H leaders, parents and members are law-abiding citizens who obey local, state and federal laws.

### 4-H Club Meetings

Clubs may meet on a monthly basis, however some clubs meet weekly or twice a month. It is up to the individual club to determine the time, place and date of club meetings. A club meeting includes a structured business portion and an educational activity. The 4-H club secretary will record attendance and meeting minutes. Minutes are reviewed and approved at each club meeting. The Secretary's book of club meeting minutes is to be submitted to the 4-H office each year in June (see 4-H calendar).

### Membership Fees

The 4-H membership fee is \$20.00 per youth, ages 8-18, as of September 1st, enrolled in a 4-H Club. The online registration process includes a payment portal. Clover bud members and adult volunteers do not pay a membership fee. Some clubs also charge members a reasonable fee for project materials. If dues are charged, the amount must be written in the club by-laws.

### Equipment Requirements

Members cannot be required to own specific resources (such as horse, steer or sewing machine) to belong to a club, but club dues may be collected to purchase supplies and equipment. All 4-H equipment and items are the property of the Citrus County 4-H.

### 4-H Uniforms

There is no required uniform for 4-H events, activities, or camps; however, for most 4-H activities and competitive events youth are strongly encouraged to wear a clover patch or pin to show 4-H affiliation (fair and outside events may have different requirements). All 4-H members are encouraged to wear the 4-H colors of green and white during 4-H activities and events. A 4-H jacket/vest may be ordered from the 4-H Mall.

### Club Funds

Records must be kept of all club financial business. The Treasurer's book and all supporting materials are to be submitted to the 4-H office each year in June. The club Treasurer may request a copy of the club account statement from the 4-H office with a minimum of three (3) working days notice. If a club should disband, any equipment purchased with club funds must be returned to the 4-H office to be added to the general 4-H account.

## Fundraising

Before a 4-H fundraising project begins, it must be reviewed and approved by the 4-H agent. A club leader submits a Fundraising Request Form to the 4-H office at least one week before the event. Check with the 4-H Office for this form. Funds raised are deposited at the 4-H Office within two (2) business days after the event. These funds are then deposited to the 4-H Club account. When planning a fund raising activity, youth need to decide how the funds will be spent. What project will they fund? How will the funds be spent? What will be purchased? Etc.

## Additional Policies

### Use of Alcohol, Drugs, Firearms, Etc.

The possession or use of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, drugs, narcotics, firearms and/or weapons is strictly prohibited at all times at any 4-H program, event, or activity. The exception—in the course of Shooting Sports meetings and events—firearms are allowed in the possession of adult volunteers and youth 4-H members.

### Child Safety/Well-being

4-H volunteers and parents recognize that verbal and/or physical abuse and/or neglect of youth is unacceptable. 4-H staff, faculty, and Club leaders are trained to identify and report on child safety.

### Cell Phones

Use of cell phone or other mobile electronic device during a scheduled 4-H activity is prohibited unless activity-specific rules otherwise allow. When permitted, these devices should be used only in a manner consistent with the approved activity, and not discourteous or disruptive.

### Volunteer Screening

4-H volunteers working directly with youth will be screened in accordance with University of Florida and State of Florida requirements. The onboarding process for new and returning 4-H volunteers involves background screening, interviews, and continued training.

### Transportation

All volunteers and/or parents who transport Florida 4-H participants are required to be 18 years or older, possess a valid driver's license with a safe driving record and automobile insurance, and otherwise comply with state and local laws. Additionally, Florida 4-H requires that drivers utilize a transport vehicle that is in good repair and working order. When transporting youth, the "2-deep" policy is in effect. Two authorized Level 2 enrolled adults present during any interactions with youth.

Transportation to and from many Florida 4-H activities, not a part of the activity, is the responsibility of the participant and his/her family. Florida 4-H has no ownership or control over any privately owned vehicles and relies on the drivers compliance to 4-H policies and procedures.

Detailed information on all Florida 4-H policies can be found here:







# Awards and Recognition



## Project Report/Record Book

Each 4-H member participates in a 4-H project. These projects vary widely, but serve as a record of a member's year in 4-H. There are guidelines in place for the completion of a project record book. Some 4-H project books are designed to take 2-3 years for total completion. There are benchmarks in place for earning annual completion goals for these projects. Check with your club leader or contact the 4-H office to learn more.

4-H club leaders and volunteers provide assistance to 4-H members on how to complete a project record book. Completing project record books is required for project recognition, clover award recognition and to receive 4-H event scholarships and compete in some district and state level competitions.

Available project books can be found on the [4-H mall](#).

Contact the 4-H Office to request 4-H project books. Each Citrus County 4-H member may request 3 project books, at no cost, from the 4-H Office.

Project books/ Project reports are due to the 4-H office in May/June to be evaluated and returned at the Annual awards banquet. For each project book completed, youth are awarded ribbons for their efforts. Blue ribbon record books will receive a 4-H pin that corresponds to the project book category. Refer to the 4-H newsletter for exact dates each year.

## Purpose

Establishing and working towards self-set goals is an important part of a 4-H project. Each youth member is unique; their goals and pace will vary. Recognition is an essential part of the 4-H experience, as youth learn through individual and group participation.

The 4-H recognition program includes five types of accomplishments or goals. Each goal is unique in the way it motivates young people and recognizes their achievements. The five types of accomplishments 4-H measures for recognition are:

- ~ Participation in educational experiences.
- ~ Progress toward self-set goals.
- ~ Achieving Performance Standards.
- ~ Excelling in peer competition.
- ~ Excelling in cooperation with a group.

## Recognition and Judging Models

Most competitive events are judged on a modified Danish system. This means that all youth or their exhibits are judged on their own merit. The top score then determines an overall winner. Clover buds, 4-H members age 5-7, do not participate in competitive activities. However, they may enter as participants and receive participation recognition. Horse shows are often judged using a different standard. Be sure to ask the sponsoring agency what judging model will be used.

## Project Categories

4-H projects are divided into the following categories:

- ~ Animal Science
- ~ Biological Sciences
- ~ Civic Engagement
- ~ Communication Arts
- ~ Community Service
- ~ Consumer and Family Science
- ~ Environmental Ed.
- ~ Food and Nutrition
- ~ Health
- ~ Leadership
- ~ Personal Development
- ~ Personal Safety

## Project Pins

4-H members may earn 4-H project pins at the completion of the 4-H project year. Youth members must submit a completed 4-H project report and earn a 85% according to the 4-H Project Report rubric. Members that submit a 4-H project report will receive a 4-H year pin. For clover bud members (ages 5-7 years), a "Sprouting Pin" will be awarded at the end of their final clover bud year. Year pins are awarded to junior, intermediate, and senior 4-H members that submit a completed 4-H project report by the deadline.

## Clover Awards

The Florida 4-H Recognition Model is a comprehensive plan that acknowledges positive learning behaviors in young people. The model is designed to meet the needs, interests, and aspirations of young people from different backgrounds and life experiences. Check with your club leader or the 4-H office to find out how you can participate in the Citrus County Clover Awards program.

## Portfolios

Completing a Senior Portfolio will allow youth to compete for national award trips (14-18 year olds) and scholarships (graduating seniors). The process will improve your skills of marketing yourself. You will complete an application, create a resume, write a narrative about yourself, and submit the information as a packet. Youth with portfolio scores of 90 or above will qualify for an in person interview.

Eligible youth (14-18 years old) may work with the 4-H staff in preparing for and completing the portfolio process. For assistance, meet with your agent **no less than 4 months before the June 1st** deadline. While assistance and guidance are provided by the 4-H staff during the portfolio process, portfolios are the responsibility of the individual 4-H member.

## Activity and Event Scholarships

Summer camp and state level 4-H event scholarships are determined by Performance Standard level achievement and funds availability. Clover Award forms are available by contacting the 4-H Office.

Partial scholarships for other 4-H events throughout the year will be determined by the 4-H office and will depend on the amount of money available and the number of youth participating. Any 4-H member interested should request a scholarship application from the 4-H office.

A 4-H member may qualify to receive a full or partial scholarship to attend Florida 4-H University/Legislature, State/Regional Horse Show, State or National Judging Events, 4-H Camp or other 4-H activity. To qualify for a 4-H scholarships, the 4-H member must be actively involved at the club/county level and:

## 4-H EVENTS

The following is an overview of events that 4-H members in Citrus County may complete a scholarship application to attend.

### **Junior 4-H members: (8-10 yrs. old)**

4-H Camping at a Florida 4-H Camp

Florida 4-H is updating camping resources. Camp dates, locations, and registration information will be updated in Spring 2025.

### **Intermediate 4-H members: (11—13 yrs. old)**

Leadership Adventure Weekend

Intermediate State

4-H State level camps (ages 8-13)

### **Senior 4-H members: (14-18 yrs. old)**

4-H Legislature

4-H University

Horsemanship School (@ University of Florida) \*\*\*

### **National Events (only for senior 4-H members) \*\*\***

National Congress

National Conference

Citizenship Washington Focus

Southern Region Teen Leadership Conference

\*\*\*Scholarships for these events are handled on a case by case basis

## Continuing Education Scholarships

There are continuing education scholarships available to Citrus County 4-H members currently seniors in high school. To qualify for these scholarships, the youth must be a graduating senior in high school, have been an enrolled member of 4-H for the past 2 years, be active at the club, county, district and/or state level and submit a completed Graduating Senior Scholarship Application. Eligible 4-H members will be sent more information in the spring. Scholarships are awarded based on the level of activity and commitment a 4-H member has demonstrated to the Citrus County 4-H program. It is not guaranteed that all scholarships will be awarded each year.

**\*\*\*THIS IS A LIVING DOCUMENT AND MAY BE UPDATED DURING THE YEAR TO REFLECT OPPORTUNITIES, GUIDANCE, OBSERVATIONS AND FEEDBACK. QUESTIONS SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO THE UF/IFAS EXTENSION 4-H OFFICE.\*\*\***