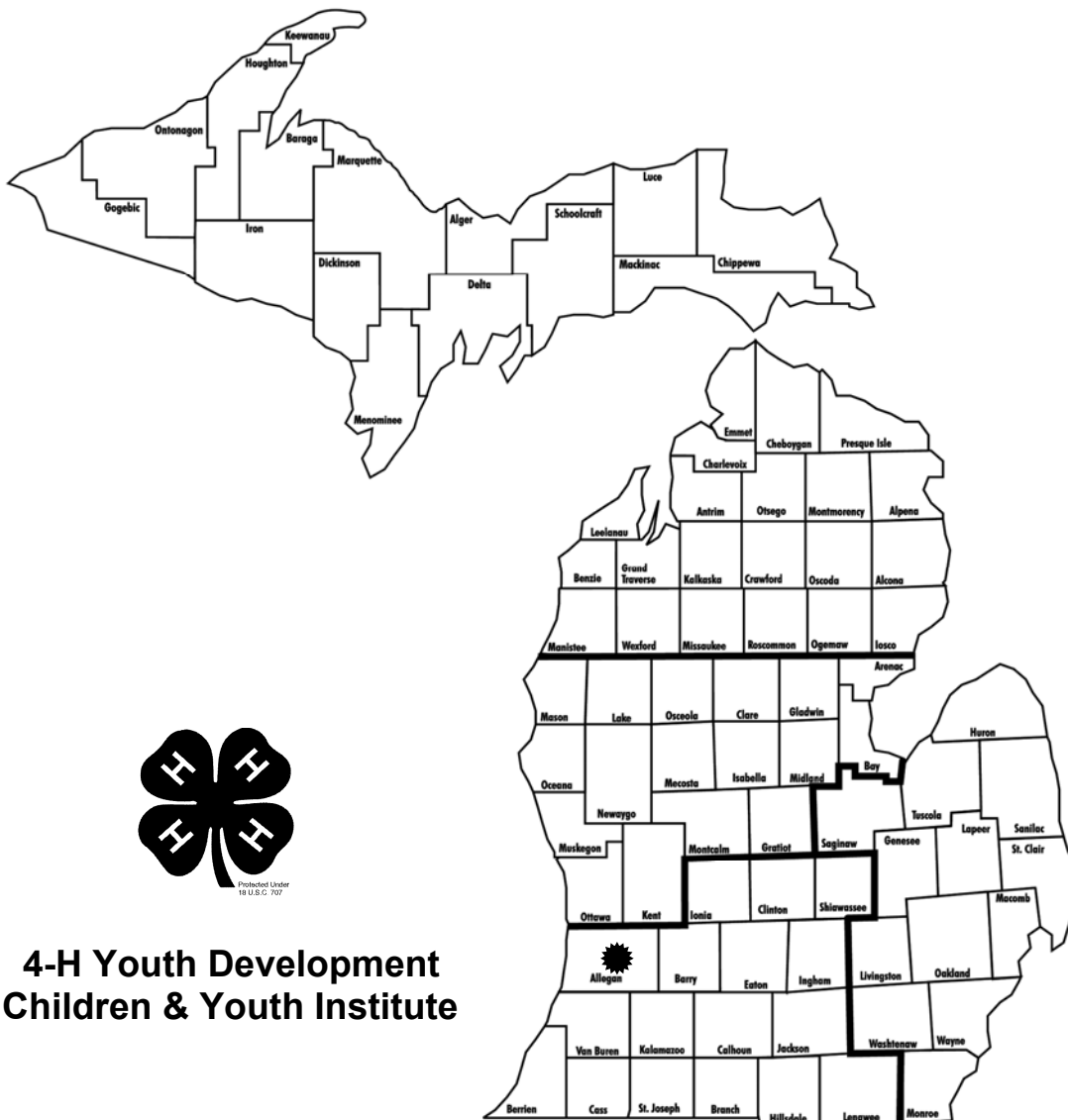


Allegan County 4-H New Volunteer Handbook



**4-H Youth Development
Children & Youth Institute**

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

Updated February 2023



4-H Emblem

A four-leaf clover with the letter “H” on each leaflet. This accepted emblem – symbolizing the four-square development of Head, Heart, Hands and Health – is protected by a copyright under the United States Department of Agriculture.

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.

4-H Motto

“To make the best better”

4-H Slogan

“Learning by doing”

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Welcome to the 4-H Program in Allegan County!

On behalf of the Allegan County 4-H staff and council, welcome to 4-H! This handbook contains answers to some of the most commonly asked questions about 4-H in Allegan County. It is meant to be a resource for new and current 4-H volunteers. Feel free to read it from cover to cover or just to take a few moments to review the topics you find interesting. This handbook's purpose is to help strengthen our existing 4-H programs and to provide the support you need to be successful as a 4-H volunteer.

Section A: Introduction to 4-H

4-H is the youth development program of Michigan State University Extension. 4-H uses the resources of the United States Department of Agriculture, Michigan State University, Michigan State University Extension (MSUE), county government and local partners to support **positive youth development**. 4-H provides research-based, positive, experiential learning opportunities for, and with, the young people of our communities. We strive to create safe, inclusive environments that promote positive relationships between youth and caring adults, and that offer possibilities for young people to **build life skills**.

For questions about Allegan County's 4-H Youth Development programs, contact The 4-H Program Coordinator at 269-673-0370 press 2557

We are located at 3255 122nd Avenue, Suite 200, the first floor of the Human Services Building, Allegan MI 49010. You can also access information on our county 4-H program by visiting our Web site at <https://www.canr.msu.edu/allegan/> and click on the 4-H Youth page.

What is 4-H?

4-H Youth Development is the youth program of Michigan State University Extension. Extension staff members work at Michigan State University and in every Michigan county. Our job is to bring the knowledge of the state's land-grant university to the citizens of Michigan. This is accomplished through the efforts of thousands of volunteers who work along with paid Extension staff.

The program known as "4-H" was officially established nationally in 1902. The first Michigan 4-H clubs were formed as boys' and girls' agricultural clubs in 1908. Through these clubs, young people learned practical skills that they used throughout their lives. Now, 4-H clubs and the 4-H concept not only exist in our nation's rural areas, but also in urban areas. Michigan boasts more than 200,000 members, over 20,000 volunteer leaders and countless projects in which young people participate.

What is the mission of the Michigan 4-H Youth Development program?

The mission of the Michigan 4-H Youth Development program is to **"Create environments, through collaboration, that build strong and healthy young people who are proactive in a complex and changing world."**

We accomplish this by creating **nonformal, educational opportunities** designed to help kids **explore** new ideas, **experience** a variety of new opportunities and friendships and build skills designed to help them **achieve** their goals.

In Michigan 4-H we are committed to helping young people:

1. Connect with positive adult role models and mentors.
2. Make new friends in safe learning environments.
3. Take the lead in what they do and how they develop.
4. Set the pace of their learning.
5. Learn skills that will allow them to be productive members of society.
6. Build understanding of others who are part of our communities and world.
7. Become active citizens through their service and leadership.

These seven goals are the foundation for the ***Michigan 4-H Guiding Principles for Positive Youth Development***. MSU Extension and its 4-H staff support the 4-H Guiding Principles by:

What we believe

In 4-H, we believe:

- ❖ The 4-H **member is more important than the 4-H project**.
- ❖ 4-Her's should be their own best exhibit.
- ❖ No award is worth sacrificing the reputation of a member or volunteer.
- ❖ Competition should never be emphasized more than learning by doing.
- ❖ Learning how to do the project is more important than the project.
- ❖ **Learning by doing is fundamental** in 4-H.
- ❖ The most important lessons are taught through actions, not through words.
- ❖ There is more than one good way to do most things.
- ❖ Every person needs to be noticed, feel important and be praised.
- ❖ Our job is to help young people learn how to think and make good decisions.
- ❖ **The young person is the volunteer's "project."**

Allegan County 4-H Mission Statement

We are here to serve the need of all youth in Allegan County and to form a team of volunteers to use whatever means necessary to deliver relative programs that lead to youth development and individual growth.

How does 4-H happen?

Common delivery methods for 4-H youth development programs include

- ❖ clubs,
- ❖ school enrichment programs,
- ❖ summer programs,
- ❖ planned mentoring,
- ❖ short-term special interest programs,
- ❖ and self-determined/independent projects undertaken by youth with parental guidance.

Programming is primarily carried out during out-of-school time, in community settings.

What does it cost to participate in 4-H?

The \$20 participation fee has been waived for the current 4-H Year.

A 4-H club or group may hold fund-raisers (with prior approval from the 4-H staff person at the MSU Extension office) or ask for a small amount of money from its members to pay for club activities. The cost to individual 4-H members varies, depending on the activities in which he or she is involved. For example, a young person involved in a food project might use household supplies while a 4-H member in a horse project might invest hundreds of dollars to purchase and maintain a horse. Time and money investments in 4-H activities are left up to the member, the member's parents and the 4-H club.

Section B: Important Policies and Procedures

County 4-H policy is determined by the Allegan County 4-H Youth Council under the auspices of the county MSU Extension. The 4-H Youth Council is comprised of an Adult and Teen Representative from each county-wide committee and a resource leader. The 4-H Youth Council uses advice from 4-H members, leaders and parents; county and state 4-H staff; and/or others interested in the county 4-H program.

What is “4-H age”?

“4-H age” is determined by a young person’s age as of January 1 of the current 4-H program year (which runs from September 1 through August 31). Michigan 4-H Youth Development programs are open to young people aged 5 through 19.

Children aged 5 through 7 are eligible to be Cloverbud members. Cloverbud 4-H activities, like those for older youth, are designed to be safe, age appropriate, educational and fun. A key difference, however, is that 4-H Cloverbud activities have a specific **noncompetitive** focus.

The 4-H activities for youth aged 8 through 19 are also designed to be safe, age appropriate, educational and fun. Most counties offer some sort of competitive events (that is, events that are judged, ranked, placed and so forth) for young people in this age group.

Enrollment procedures

The 4-H Year runs from September thru August. Because our Fair is in September most clubs start the new 4-H Year in October. At the beginning of each 4-H year the club administrative leader contacts members and sets a date for re-enrollment meeting and has 4-H members, parents and leaders complete the re-enrollment information on 4-HOnline. [To continue as 4-H members and not miss activities youth must be re-enrolled by November 30th For 4-H Volunteers leaders must complete the needed forms in Volunteer Central and in 4-HOnline by November 1st.](#)

Enrollment Deadline - July 1 is the last date a new member may be enrolled or have a project added to a 4-H member’s record. Enrollment deadlines for Market Livestock, horse & dog projects are the same as tagging and animal designation deadlines.

Residence

Individuals living in one county may be 4-H members in another county as determined by county policy. However, a member may enroll in any given project in only one county at any given time. The purpose of this policy is to assist those youth who live in proximity of another county, go to school in another county and/or have friends in another county where joining a club in the adjacent county is in the member’s best interest educationally and socially. This policy is not intended to provide an escape mechanism for 4-H members not willing to follow the rules in their resident county. Questions regarding member acceptance in the adjacent county rest with the county 4-H Council and/or MSU Extension staff of the receiving county.

Deadlines and Rules

It is the philosophy of Allegan County 4-H to have as few rules and regulations as possible; however, rules do exist! Some rules are made at the state or national level and apply a guides or codes of conduct. These are given to us and made available to participants as appropriate. We work throughout the year with groups of local 4-H volunteers who set up their own bylaws

and procedures for reviewing and setting rules and regulations. These groups have established meeting dates throughout the year. When they make rules they also are the enforcers of the rules. To get a rule changed you must work with these groups during their regular meetings.

The proper compliance with established, stated and published final dates and deadlines is considered an appropriate expectation of 4-H membership. Submitting required exhibits, applications, reports, etc. on time and following the rules is part of the 4-H learning experience and is considered reasonable. Individuals not complying with these expectations may lose awards and privileges. This is especially true in animal projects where animal ownership, raising and identification have a specific time line as part of the project requirements. Members not complying with established and published requirements may be denied any and all premiums or awards for that project.

Animal project requirements

There are specific requirements for some projects such as market animals, dogs and horses. Please see the current specific project rules and guidelines for the most up to date information. 4-H members in the horse and pony project area may borrow or lease their project animal(s) and declare this to the Allegan County Horse 4-H Horse Association by the established deadline.

Workshop and Event registration

There are many local, regional and state 4-H events and activities. The member or leader registers and pays for the workshop or event. 4-H Incentives and Council scholarships are available and members and leaders may request reimbursement up to the incentive and or scholarship amount.

Allegan County Fair

Youth do not have to be enrolled in 4-H to participate in the Allegan County Fair. In order to show in the Youth Department of the Allegan County fair youth must live in Allegan County OR be a member of an Allegan County youth club such as 4-H or FFA. The Youth entry deadline is August 10 of every year. Entries must be turned in to the Allegan County Fair Office in Allegan. The Allegan County Fair begins every year in September the Friday after Labor Day. For details on the Allegan County fair, including the premium book, please go to the website:

<http://www.allegancountyfair.com>

Exhibition of 4-H projects in local, county or state exhibits/fairs is considered a privilege and is voluntary on the part of the exhibitor. The exhibitor must follow the rules as set in the local Premium book. The exhibition of 4-H projects provides the 4-H'er an opportunity to display their 4-H projects, entertain wholesome competition and enjoy a positive educational/social environment with their peers. With the privilege of exhibition also comes the obligation of abiding by all of the rules attendant to the respective project. Disobedience of the established rules of the projects may be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including exclusion from the exhibition.

Projects and Completion

All projects must be prepared, constructed or assembled by the youth. A school project may not necessarily be a 4-H project – however if the youth works with his/her leader and teacher for a combined project that is acceptable. The 4-H member must have primary responsibility for development, care and/or training of their project on or before any and all applicable county enrollment/registration/ownership deadlines and continuously until after the project(s) is officially

completed. Breeding stock animals must be owned by the 4-H member. EXCEPTION: Joint ownership within a family is acceptable.

Attendance at six (6) meetings is expected as a part of a member's overall educational experience. 4-H club leaders and members of local clubs may establish goals for attendance, exhibits, completion, etc. to meet criteria established for awards and recognition within their club as long as they do not conflict with MSU Extension affirmative action policies.

A 4-H member is considered "complete" in his/her project work when he/she has

- (1) filled out and submitted an official 4-H club member enrollment form on 4-HOnline by the established and published date for enrolling,
- (2) turned in any required project reports by the established and published deadline date and
- (3) exhibited the require project exhibit at the Allegan County Fair during the current project year or at other 4-H events agreed on by the club.

Trip Notification

If your club is planning an outing, please contact the 4-H Program Coordinator phone (269-673-0370 x 2557) or by email, if it is an overnight or out-of-county event. When you call or email be prepared to give us the following information: 1. number of members going, 2. number of 4-H VSP certified volunteers, 3. departure and return times and dates, 4. destination, 5. planned activities, 6. if parent permission has been obtained, and 7. club accident insurance paid yearly covers you. You need to let the office know of any accident at the time of the incident. *Review and agree to 4-H Overnight rules.*

Michigan 4-H Code of Conduct Policy

During enrollment each year members and leaders are asked to sign a code of conduct in order to participate in the 4-H Program thru 4-HOnline (members) and Volunteer Central (leaders). The Code of Conduct will be followed at all 4-H club and committee meetings, activities and events.

Evaluation, Media Release, Medical Treatment

During enrollment in 4-HOnline members and leaders complete authorizations on these items. Completion is required. (Authorization of Media release is optional). Parents are required to sign with members 18 and under.



Section C: Role of the 4-H Volunteer

Resource volunteers

These individuals are willing to share their interests and expertise with young people but they are not involved with just one 4-H club or group. Typically resource volunteers work with multiple clubs or help with countywide workshops or events held throughout the year.

Administrative leader

Administrative leaders are responsible for the club's overall management. These leaders' responsibilities may include securing club meeting sites, securing new 4-H members, managing the club's reenrollment process, informing 4-H members about upcoming events and recruiting 4-H project leaders, once members have identified their areas of interest. Although the administrative leader may have project leader responsibility, his or her job is to keep things rolling in the club. This may include making follow-up phone calls to project leaders. In general, at the most, administrative leaders should be project leaders for only one project area.

Project leader

A project leader works with small groups of youth in a specific project area. Usually, a project leader is a parent who is interested in learning more, or is knowledgeable, about a given project area. However, project leaders may include grandparents, teachers, neighbors, business people as well as teens. Generally, project leaders meet with a group of youth (usually less than 10) at least six times during the year. For example, they may meet once per week for six weeks or once every two months. By working in a small group, these leaders become significant mentors and they play a major role in the lives of young people.

Activity leader

An activity leader is responsible for a specific activity or event, either within a club or on a countywide basis.

Teen leader

Teen leaders are young people, usually aged 14 or older, who have a significant interest in a project area or activity. They may assist an adult in a given project area or activity or they may take some major leadership for overall club activities if no adult volunteer is available. In either case, they work with younger members. Both ways of being a teen leader can be very valuable when putting a resume together! Adult volunteers are responsible for training teen leaders so that they have the knowledge and leadership skills to insure a successful experience for the 4-H members with whom they work.

Volunteer Training Opportunities

4-H volunteers can participate in a great deal of training if they desire to do so. Training is offered in person, virtually and on demand.



Section D: The 4-H Club Structure

4-H clubs are the most common delivery method for 4-H youth development programs. Clubs are designed to build positive relationships and offer learning experiences over an extended period of time. The unique opportunity for social and personal development provided through a 4-H club structure is the most effective and efficient way to achieve 4-H's mission.

Active participation in a 4-H club helps young people develop their assets and life skills. As a result of participating in a 4-H club, we hope young people will gain:

- Greater knowledge and appreciation of themselves and others.
- Decision-making skills.
- Public and interpersonal communication skills.
- Positive interactions with other young people and with adults.
- Responsibility for themselves.
- An ethic of service to group and community.
- An attitude of lifelong inquiry and application of information.
- An ability to relate to a constantly changing world.
- Strengthened family interactions.
- Career exploration and workforce preparation skills.
- Leadership skills.
- Ability to work effectively as part of a team.
- Greater understanding of and appreciation for diversity.
- Practical knowledge and skills in project areas.
- Positive conflict resolution skills.

What is a 4-H club?

A club can be defined as a group of individuals who have common objectives, meet periodically and jointly support one another. The primary purpose of a 4-H club is to support the development of each youth participant's full potential. The club structure helps volunteers build significant relationships with members. Projects become a means of achieving the primary purpose of positive youth development.

The focus of a 4-H club's activities is determined by the common needs and interests of the young people and the adults involved. Members, volunteers, leaders, and parents should work together to set the club program and establish expectations for everyone involved.

Clubs are sanctioned and permitted to use the 4-H emblem by their county Michigan State University Extension office. Clubs should have young people in leadership roles and practice democratic principles. 4-H clubs are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital, family, or veteran status.

4-H Clubs must....

- each year submit a signed statement that their club doesn't discriminate.
- consist of at least 5 members from 2 different families, one leader and have a minimum of 6 meetings/activities. A project group must have at least 6 work sessions/activities.
- have projects that are led by an adult Project Leader. A club can offer only projects it has leaders for. A Teen Leader assists the adult leader by helping with project meetings, etc.
- to be considered **active**, a 4-H Club must have a minimum of 5 members from 2 different families and 1 adult active gold leader enrolled in 4-HOnline. Only **active** clubs are eligible to vote at county wide committee meetings.

4-H Clubs are encouraged to...

- have a structure that gives members the primary responsibility for making decisions and operating the club. (This may be done with elected officers).
- have an organized, fun and educational program planned by members, volunteers and parents.
- participate in learning experiences outside of the local group.
- be involved in the community through community service.
- create recognition of progress for individual and group goals.

What types of 4-H clubs are there?

The three basic types of clubs are **project**, **community** and **special interest**. A **project** club consists of a group of members who get together and who have one common interest. Some examples of project clubs are dog obedience, computers and horses. A **community** club may offer two or more projects within the club. Community clubs typically have multiple adult leaders. One volunteer will fill the role of administrative leader while others provide project-specific support for members' learning activities. **Special-interest** clubs are usually short-term clubs that meet for a specified amount of time. Examples of special-interest clubs include snowmobile, sailing, or softball.

How does a youth join a 4-H Club?

It is the responsibility of each 4-H club administrative leader to help new and returning 4-H members and their families understand what needs to be completed. There are guides to help families use 4-HOnline to enroll in 4-H. Young people and adults interested in joining a 4-H club need to contact the group's administrative leader. Questions new members might ask could include: "When and where does the club meet?" and "What is expected of members?" Since each club is made up of unique individuals and may operate a bit differently, be prepared to answer a lot of questions! An excellent resource for ideas about how to help your 4-H club operate is *Keys to a Successful 4-H Club* (4-H 1605). This publication can be obtained from the MSU Extension Office.

When can youth join a 4-H club?

Generally, new youth can join 4-H at any time during the year until July 1st. However, some clubs may have enrollment deadlines. Certain animal projects also have enrollment and tagging deadlines. The Email Blasts and 4-H Family Newsletters are only mailed to current 4-H Families after the first of the year, so it is best to enroll in the fall for the new year.

How can 4-H clubs and groups be expanded?

By far the best method of recruitment is for others to see 4-H members having fun and learning new skills. In addition, 4-H clubs are encouraged to use promotional materials provided by their county MSU Extension office. When a club does a community service activity, it is encouraged to communicate with the 4-H staff person and the media, too!

What size should a club or group be?

A club or group's volunteer leadership and its members should determine its size. While there is no perfect size for a 4-H club, they are often comprised of 10 to 20 members. A club or group's membership will be influenced by the members' age, the number of volunteers available to assist the members in their learning project and the number of different projects in which it is involved. A larger club can offer opportunities for the members to gain leadership experience as a club officer and it works quite well if the group forms project clusters of members with the same interest. Smaller clubs made up of 6 to 10 members allow young people to work as a team on projects.

Can the size of a 4-H club or group be limited?

The size of a 4-H club may be limited. The decision must be based on nondiscriminatory guidelines and it should have the best interest of young people at its core. In some circumstances where volunteer recruitment is a challenge, the size may be limited to ensure members have a positive experience and the volunteers involved don't burn out. Clubs may also have a group-established enrollment period. In that case, **a waiting list needs to be maintained to avoid any type of discrimination.** If your club or group decides to stop accepting members during the year, notify the county staff.

Who runs the 4-H club or group meetings?

Members should run the club meetings and make a majority of the decisions. Conducting meetings, with the guidance of adult volunteers, is an excellent way for young people to build leadership and communication skills. The administrative (or organizational) leader has the responsibility of meeting with the club officers prior to the meeting to help them plan the agenda. It is a good idea to discuss topics ahead of time so adult participation in discussions during the meeting is kept to a minimum. A 4-H club's environment provides an opportunity for members to share ideas and reach decisions based on those ideas. **The club environment should be focused on helping young people learn how to make decisions, live with choices and follow through on commitments.**

Is our club or group required to follow parliamentary procedure when making decisions? Parliamentary procedure is one method of decision-making that can be used by a 4-H club or group. It is a skill 4-H members can learn now, that will be useful to them in adulthood. Consensus decision-making is also an option. The type of decision-making procedure a club chooses to employ should be based on the type of decision to be made. For more information on parliamentary procedure, see attachment "Basic Parliamentary Procedure for 4-H Clubs,"

Should our group do a community service project?

The third "H" in 4-H – representing "hands" – is a part of the pledge. Each club is encouraged to participate in at least one community service project each year. This helps teach 4-H members the value of community involvement. For community service project ideas in which your group could be involved visit the Michigan 4-H Youth Development Community Service Website https://www.canr.msu.edu/community_service_learning/

How do I handle behavioral issues in the club?

It is a privilege to be a part of a 4-H club and 4-H members, parents and volunteers need to respect the rights of all members. Disruptive adults or members run the risk of having their membership terminated. Of course, this should be used as a last resort and for members, it should occur only after the member and his or her parent(s) have been informed that this is a possible final outcome. Only MSU Extension staff can terminate a person's involvement in 4-H. If you are experiencing problems in your club, contact the Allegan County staff at 269-673-0370 (press 2557) for assistance.



CLUB PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES AND EXPECTATIONS

Each 4-H club is unique. It is important for everyone in the group to agree upon and understand the expectations of members, leaders and parents. Each time members join the group the following items should be discussed:

- Dates, length and location of meetings
- Attendance expectations
- Responsibilities of members, leaders and parents
- Ground rules for group behavior
- Respect and safety of property
- Transportation to meetings and events
- Finances

Member responsibilities

- Select project with the help of parents and leaders
- Do the project
- Keep a Personal Record book up-to-date
- Attend 4-H meetings or call leader when going to be absent.
- Take part in 4-H activities and events
- Inform parents of 4-H club activities
- Learn the 4-H pledge and motto and more!
- Having fun!
- Participating in group activities.
- Helping younger members.
- Serving as a club officer.
- Promoting 4-H.
- Becoming involved in countywide 4-H committees.
- Exhibiting good character and being a positive role model.

Leader responsibilities

- Guide the work of club members
- Involve members in planning and decision
- Make learning fun
- Attend leader trainings
- Attend county wide project committee meetings and share activity/event information with members and parents.
- Communicate with parents

Parent responsibilities

- Provide transportation
- Support financial costs as agreed by club
- Show interest and encouragement for member's work
- Assist with club as needed and asked
- Attend club family functions

MANAGING 4-H CLUB FINANCES

Any club or group that has a treasury should open a bank account. The procedures for doing this, for handling the club treasury and for conducting fund-raisers can be found in the *Michigan Financial Manual for 4-H Treasurers* (4-H 1203). Each Club has been given one of these for their Treasurer to use. You can also download a copy at this link: https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/financial_manual_for_4_h_treasurers

The treasurer should return it at the end of his/her term to the Administrative leader. **All 4-H clubs (whether or not they handle money) must also submit an “Annual Summary Financial Report” to the Allegan County MSU Extension office as a part of the annual reenrollment process by October 15.**

Local 4-H groups may choose to raise money for specific goals through fund-raising or dues or both. Fund-raising should be done for the good of the total group and should be consistent with the county 4-H fund-raising guidelines. Fund-raising should not be the main focus of club activities nor should it exclude any individual from participation.

Plans for fund-raising activities or asking for donations must be reviewed and approved by the 4-H staff person before the event is held or donations are solicited. This is done when groups complete and submit to the county 4-H office a “County 4-H Fund-Raiser Application,” before the event. Groups must also complete a “County 4-H Fund-Raising Report Form,” when the event is over. (These forms may be found on the Allegan County MSUE website – on the 4-H Leader page) https://www.canr.msu.edu/allegan/allegan_county_4_h/general-info

All money raised using the 4-H name is publicly accountable. Therefore, it must be used only for 4-H activities such as paying for educational programs, activities, workshops or 4-H group supplies. These funds must not be used in any way to enrich individuals. This means they may not be given to individual group members or others.

Since 4-H is an educational youth development organization, drawings, raffles and various games of chance (gambling) are inappropriate ways to raise money. Appropriate fund-raising activities involve youth and provide learning and serving experiences for all involved. Please note **it is illegal for young people aged 18 and under to purchase or sell raffle or drawing tickets.**



Section E: Staffing Support for 4-H

4-H Program Oversight

Any 4-H activity or event falls within the oversight of Michigan State University Extension. In Allegan County, the District #7 Director has the overall responsibility for all Extension-related activity. All 4-H activities are under the guidance of the 4-H Program Coordinator. As the paid staff of MSU Extension, these individuals have ultimate responsibility for the decisions, programs and activities that occur under the 4-H name. It is the responsibility of Extension staff to ensure that programs and activities operate within the guidelines, policies, and procedures of Michigan State University and MSU Extension. At times, it may be necessary for staff to deny a request made by volunteers for some type of program or overturn a decision made by volunteer advisory or developmental committees because the decision is not in compliance with a university, 4-H or Extension policy.

What can the 4-H staff do for me?

A 4-H staff person's responsibilities are divided into two main responsibility areas, education and program management.

Education - In this role, 4-H staff may lead workshops and trainings for club members, youth groups, volunteers and schools. We also meet one on one and in small groups to provide training and educational resources from MSU and other research-based universities and organizations.

Program management - County 4-H staff are ultimately responsible for all 4-H programming that occurs in the county. They work with and through volunteers, community members, youth, teachers, and others to develop and implement programs and activities that promote positive youth development.

When should I contact a 4-H staff person?

Feel free to contact 4-H staff any time you have questions or if you need suggestions and ideas for educational resources to use with programs. There are times, however, when it is necessary to contact a 4-H staff person immediately. These include when:

- Someone is injured while participating in a 4-H activity.
- Behavioral problems or discipline issues arise in your club or group.
- Concerns about discrimination.
- You or someone else raise concerns or questions about financial management or mismanagement of funds.
- You are having personality conflicts or disagreement with other volunteers in the club or group. 4-H staff encourages volunteers to sit down and discuss things with each other before contacting the 4-H Program Coordinator. If this does not resolve the problem, do not hesitate to call the 4-H Staff (269-673-0370 x 2557).
- There are parental-behavior concerns within your club or group.

Section F: Structural Framework in 4-H

What is the Allegan County 4-H Council?

The 4-H council is the main decision-making body for the county 4-H program. It is responsible for working with the 4-H staff to support county 4-H program planning, administration and policy making. The council is charged with keeping track of “the big picture” for our county 4-H program. It assists with volunteer recruitment, 4-H awareness building, and it oversees things such as member and volunteer recognition and the county award program.

The Allegan County 4-H Council is made up of the adult and teen representatives from the county wide 4-H committees, 4-H resource leaders and 4-H Adult and Teen Leaders at large. Regular monthly meetings are held the 3rd Tuesday at 6:30pm. The meetings are advertised in the Weekly Email Blasts and Monthly Family newsletters. Activities include: County Wide 4-H Auction and Awards Celebration along with various clinics and fun events. The Allegan County 4-H Council and all 4-H affiliated groups are recognized as charitable, nonprofit, tax exempt 501(c)3 organizations.

County committees

4-H Creative & Educational Committee meets throughout the year to help 4-H Leaders and members succeed by sharing and learning through creative and educational activities. Leaders can share projects and hands on opportunities to learn projects that they can teach in their clubs. Notices of meetings are in the Family newsletter. Reminders are also emailed to leaders. Contact the 4-H staff to be added to the email list.

4-H Horse Association made up of Adult and Teen 4-H Horse Leaders meet the first Monday of the month throughout the year to plan and conduct learning opportunities in the Horse Project Area. Activities include: Fuzzy Fun Show, Beth Wykstra Memorial Show, Horse Five Day Clinic, various clinics and fair shows.

4-H Livestock Leaders Association made up of Adult and teen 4-H livestock leaders meet the 2nd Tuesday of the month throughout the year to promote and plan learning opportunities. Activities include: 4-H Dairy Judging, 4-H Dairy Quiz Bowl, 4-H Livestock Judging, 4-H Beef, Sheep & Goat Show, 4-H Beef, Swine, Lamb, Goat and Rabbit Carcass Contests, 4-H Small Livestock Clinic.

4-H Dog Leaders is made up of project leaders from around the county. The group meets throughout the year to plan local educational events and securing funding for plaques and extra judges at the Fair youth Dog Shows.

How can I financially support 4-H?

Donations can be made directly to a specific 4-H club or the 4-H Council. Donations can also be made to the Michigan 4-H Foundation to support Allegan County 4-H through our county endowment or to support 4-H youth and volunteers on a statewide basis. To check out giving online, visit the Web site at <https://mi4hfdtn.org>

Do 4-H fund-raising activities pay for 4-H staff positions?

All money raised through 4-H fund-raisers supports programs that benefit young people and volunteers. No staff salaries come out of the proceeds of 4-H fund-raisers.

Liability Insurance Coverage

All registered 4-H volunteers are covered by Michigan State University *liability* insurance. Michigan State University's general liability coverage protects employees and volunteers against claims of negligent acts that result in bodily injury to a third party, damage to the property of others or personal injury (e.g., libel or slander). MSUE employees and volunteers are covered while providing services on behalf of MSU under the direction of an MSU representative and while performing within the scope of their assigned duties. Unincorporated clubs, associations, advisory boards and the like, under the control of MSU or MSUE, are also covered by general liability insurance. Negligence is the failure to exercise the care that a prudent person would exercise. Negligence implies inattention to one's duty or business. A volunteer is considered to be anyone who is not paid by the University (or its representative) and who provides services to the University.

As a condition of coverage, those covered by the University's insurance program are required to cooperate fully on a continuous basis with the University Risk Manager and attorneys in the management of claims.

Actions not covered by MSU general liability Insurance include intentional activities outside the scope of duties and criminal acts

4-H Accident Insurance

All 4-H members and leaders enrolled in 4-HOnline are covered by American Income Life Accident Insurance Co. The yearly premium is covered by State 4-H. The policy covers any adult supervised group 4-H event, including club meetings & activities, county and regional activities and events. A copy of the policy is available upon request from our office. Claim forms are available through our office when needed.



Section G: Awards and Recognition

Member recognition If 4-H members decide to participate in any awards program, record-keeping will be an important part of their involvement. In and of itself, record-keeping is important because it helps young people learn to document their accomplishments and develop skills in recording and summarizing their work.

One way to help youth keep records is to have them use the *Member's 4-H Personal Portfolio link here:*

[https://www.canr.msu.edu/uploads/resources/pdfs/4h1192_members_personal_record_web_for_ms_\(003\).pdf](https://www.canr.msu.edu/uploads/resources/pdfs/4h1192_members_personal_record_web_for_ms_(003).pdf)

Many groups regularly set aside some time every few meetings for members to keep their records updated. Another method is for 4-H members to keep index cards and a file box at home. Every time the member does a 4-H related activity, he or she puts the information on the card and files it in the box. Information on the card may include: name of the activity, date, who the member worked with, the outcome or impact of the activity and so forth. When the time comes to compile the information for reports, it is much easier. For members who have access to a computer, 4-H records can be kept electronically. These methods usually require motivational support from parents and volunteers.

How do I get pins and certificates for members?

Certificates and year pins (years 1 to 10) are available to all 4-H clubs at any time of the year by ordering directly from the Shop 4-H online at <https://shop4-h.org/>. Most 4-H clubs provide their members with certificates and pins at a club re-enrollment event/meeting in the fall.

Are there scholarships to help pay for attending 4-H events?

The 4-H Council offers scholarships to members and leaders.

County Awards

4-H members may apply for county awards when they reach the age of 12 (as of January 1st) and have completed at least 2 years in the project area. Members may only receive the project award once. County award winners are invited to the Awards Celebration to receive their award.

What is the Michigan State 4-H Awards Program?

The Michigan State 4-H Awards program offers members an opportunity for local and state recognition. To begin the process, members complete and submit the "State 4-H Individual (or Group) Award Report Form" to apply for awards. These applications are due in February of each year. If chosen members compete in June at MSU for state award honors with other 4-H members from all over Michigan. For more information contact your 4-H Staff.



Are any college scholarships available?

There are several college scholarships available to Michigan 4-H members in recognition of meritorious 4-H involvement. Applications for these scholarships are reviewed on a competitive basis and winners are selected on the basis of some or all of the following criteria:

- Current or former 4-H involvement
- Outstanding achievement in 4-H
- Scholastic excellence
- Broad 4-H experiences and project involvement
- 4-H involvement at county, regional, state and national levels
- Leadership and citizenship
- contributions within and outside of 4-H
- Years of 4-H involvement
- Financial need
- Thoroughness in completing application requirements
- Neatness of application

As a volunteer, you play an important role in helping young people know about these opportunities. For detailed information about scholarships or for application forms, contact your 4-H staff.

Local Scholarships: Allegan County Agricultural Society Scholarship and Geurink Memorial Scholarship. Contact the 4-H Program Coordinator for the current information on these local scholarships.

Volunteer Leader Recognition

Each year the Allegan County 4-H Council plans and conducts the Annual Meeting and Awards Celebration to recognize the dedication of our county volunteers. 4-H leaders receive certificates and pins for years of service beginning with their 1st year and then in 5 year increments. In addition there are special awards presented

- 4-H Staff Recognition Award
- 4-H Club of the Year Award
- 4-H International Award
- 4-H Leader of the Year Award
- 4-H Above and Beyond Award
- 4-H Teen Leader Award
- 4-H Teen Above and Beyond Awards
- Friend of 4-H Award
- 4-H Alumni award

But most leaders will agree that it's not the awards that keep them involved with 4-H – ***the real rewards of being a leader are:***

- Personal satisfaction of a job well done
- Watching children develop confidence
- Exceed even your own expectations
- A simple "thank you" from a child
- Seeing families work together
- Making contribution to the community
- Watching character growth in youth
- Seeing youth graduate and become community leaders
- Joy of leadership
- Smiles
- Memories
- The inner feeling of accomplishment
- Being able to learn from those you help
- Thanks from parents
- To see youth have a good time and receive recognition for their work
- Seeing that your own child is normal
- Developing teen leaders
- Expanding own horizons – personal growth and development
- Being with youth and keeping up-to-date

Resources in 4-H

What educational resources are available to help with 4-H projects? There are resources available for loan to 4-H Clubs. These items are located at the Allegan county MSU Extension Office. Contact the 4-H Program Coordinator for a list of resources. 4-H project guidelines are available on our website at https://www.canr.msu.edu/allegan/allegan_county_4_h/index

What newsletters are available? There is a statewide 4-H E-newsletter sent periodically from MSU. You may also sign up to receive an email newsletter from National 4-H. ON the county level we have a weekly Email Blast and a monthly 4-H Family newsletter. Emails on various 4-H events and activities are sent to administrative leaders for them to forward to their 4-H families.

Where can I find 4-H stuff including bulletins?

Shop 4-H is an excellent source of 4-H promotional items and gift ideas as well as curriculum. You can view the resources available by visiting the link at

https://www.canr.msu.edu/allegan/allegan_county_4_h/index A portion of all purchases made through this Web site come back to Michigan to support 4-H programming.

A catalog of available items and educational resources comes out every year in the fall. A Catalog is available to review at the county MSU Extension office. You may also contact Shop 4-H directly by telephone at (301) 961-2934.

Our county MSU Extension Office tries to keep 1 copy of available bulletins on hand for leaders to review prior to purchasing – check with the 4-H Program Coordinator to see if one you are interested in is available.

MSU Bookstore – Extension bulletins are available directly from the MSU Bookstore online.

What is the Michigan 4-H Foundation?

The Michigan 4-H Foundation is the private, fund-raising partner of Michigan 4-H Youth Development. The Michigan 4-H Foundation was founded in 1952. It provides support for 4-H statewide by:

- ❖ Obtaining, managing and distributing private, charitable contributions and major grants to support 4-H youth development activities.
- ❖ Supporting ongoing development and educational programs of the Michigan 4-H Children's Garden (located on the campus of Michigan State University).
- ❖ Advocating for continued recognition of 4-H's role in positive youth development and expanding its work to communities nationally and internationally.

The foundation is governed by a 27-member volunteer board of trustees and it maintains a membership of more than 2000 contributors. Visit the Michigan 4-H Foundation's Web site at <https://mi4hfdtn.org/> to find out how you can become a Michigan 4-H Foundation supporter.

