

General 4-H Club Information

How often do 4-H clubs meet?

Some clubs meet every week and some meet once or twice a month all year long. Others, called SPIN (SPecial INterest) clubs, will meet once a week for 6-8 weeks only. It will depend on the goals of the youth involved in the group. 4-H clubs may organize at any time of the year.

Note: Sometimes members will need to be enrolled in a project by a certain time to be eligible for a specific activity, like exhibiting at the local fair. Check this with the local MSU Extension office.

Do 4-H clubs have dues?

There are no longer participation feeds to join 4-H. If a club decides to collect dues, the amount should not be so high as to make it difficult for members to pay them and there should be a budgeted purpose for the money. The club dues may be in place of the club doing a community fundraiser. There may be a fee to participate in some educational activities, materials fees, etc. No one will be excluded from the 4-H program because of their ability to pay club dues.

Where do 4-H clubs meet?

Any place large enough and is convenient for the members of the group. Some clubs meet at leaders' or members' homes while others meet in a central place such as a school, church or community room. The space used must be accessible to all.

When do clubs meet and how long do meetings last?

The clubs should meet no less than 6 times a year. Clubs may meet for an hour or two after school, in the evening, or on the weekends. The most important thing is to have a regular meeting time, one that members and their families can remember.

What do 4-H'ers do at meetings?

Programs for meetings focus on business, educational, social, and service activities. At club meetings 4-H'ers usually do four kinds of things: project work, business meeting, recreation or social activities, and special-interest programs.

Do they do all those things at one meeting?

Sometimes, after a short business meeting, members work on their projects or have an educational activity, then play a game or two. Other times, the meeting will be devoted entirely to one thing: everyone may bring a dog and practice obedience training; help elect officers and plan the club programs; visit a local historic site, or plant flowers at a local public building.

Who plans the program for the club?

Youth members of the club do! Of course volunteers, parents, and MSU Extension Staff are there to support and help the youth with their planning. If the club is small, the whole group may make the plans. If the club is larger, ideas may come from anyone in the club and then a committee may step up to plan and carry out programs.

What do leaders do at meetings?

Leaders should be in the background at meetings to advise and provide support for members as they conduct their activities. It is important for leaders to work with club officers ahead of time, so that they and the members (not the leaders) are "front and center" during the meetings. Youth organizations like Michigan 4-H, can help young people develop life skills, provide opportunities to express their voice and make a difference in their communities. When adults step back and allow youth to take the lead in 4-H clubs, encourage and assist them to take on teen leadership roles, be a club officer, a camp counselor or plan service-learning projects, they are providing opportunities to build life skills and confidence.

Starting a New 4-H Club

How can I get a new 4-H club/group organized?

Your local 4-H staff will work with you to help organize a new 4-H club. All volunteers who would like to start a new club must complete the MSU Extension volunteer selection process (VSP) and be an approved gold level volunteer. Host 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 young people and their parents can be reached. The 4-H office will have 4-H promotion materials available.

What do we do at the first meeting?

Get acquainted and have fun with a group mixer and refreshments. Talk about and demonstrate projects the youth might like or be interested in learning. Give this part some thought beforehand and talk with the 4-H program coordinators or an experienced 4-H leader. You might also involve some 4-H'ers to talk about what they do. Also discuss when, where, and how often the group will meet.

What about officers?

A 4-H Club is a youth development organization that young people belong to where they have fun and learn together, while building important life skills. Clubs should have youth officers and whatever committees they need to run the business and activities of the club. 4-H has materials available for presidents, vice-presidents, secretaries, treasurers, news reporters, recreation leaders, and health and safety chairpersons. The club may have more or fewer officers, depending on its own needs. It is a good idea to wait for several meetings to elect officers, so members know each other.

Who names a club?

The youth members of the club do, with the help of their leader and with approval of the name through the local 4-H office.

How big should a club be?

A 4-H club must have at least 5 youth members from two or more families, at least one (preferably more) caring MSU Extension, approved adult volunteers, teen leaders and parents. The ideal club is big enough to have fun together, but small enough for everyone to feel a part of the group.

For more information check out these resources:

- [MSU Extension](#)
- [Benefits to youth members](#)
- [History of 4-H](#)
- [Michigan 4-H Foundation](#)
- [Kalamazoo County Youth Fair](#)