



THIRTY QUESTIONS

Thirty Most Frequently Asked Questions About... BECOMING A VOLUNTEER 4-H LEADER

If you want to know how to organize, sponsor, or lead a new 4-H group, read the answers to these questions.

1) What is 4-H?

4-H is the youth development education program of the University of Maine Cooperative Extension. 4-H participants range from ages 5 to 19 and, traditionally, have organized themselves into 4-H clubs to support each other as they take on "learning-by-doing" projects. Young people can also become involved in 4-H through school enrichment and afterschool programs, 4-H camps, by creating individual 4-H projects of their own, and many other activities. It is open to all, regardless of race, religion, or place of residence.

4-H teaches young people life skills necessary for success in the world.

2) Who's in charge of 4-H?

4-H is sponsored throughout Maine by the University of Maine. Nationally, it is part of the Extension System in the United States Department of Agriculture. Locally, it is conducted through the county office of the University of Maine Cooperative Extension. The office is supported, in part, by the county commissioners.

3) What do the H's stand for?

Head, Heart, Hands and Health- 4-H members 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.”



4-H MEMBERS

4) Why do kids like 4-H?

They have fun with their friends, meetings, social activities, trips, camps, and fairs. They learn to do interesting things – take care of growing things like animals and plants, re-decorate their rooms, fix their bikes, take pictures, and learn to cook for example.

5) How do you join?

Call the County 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, an adult or two may work with several interested children to start a new club. Check with the Extension Office to find out all of the things 4-Hers can do.

4-H CLUBS

6) How do you get a 4-H group organized?

Have a meeting with the youth who are interested and the adults who are willing to help. Publicize it through the local school, library or any place where children and their parents can be reached. Your county educator can help you publicize through other media.



7) What do you do at the first meeting?

Get acquainted and have fun through a group mixer and/or refreshments. Show and talk about some projects the groups might like (give this some thought in advance and discuss with an extension educator or an experienced 4-H leader). Discuss when, where and how often the group will meet.

8) What about officers?

4-H Clubs may choose to have officers and to form whatever committees they need to run their own business. Responsibilities, of course, depend on the age and capabilities of the children involved. County offices have a 4-H Officers Handbook for club officers. It is a good idea to wait until the second or third meeting to elect officers so members know each other.

9) Who names a club?

The members of the club- with their leader's guidance.

10) How often do 4-H clubs meet?

Some clubs meet every week for a month or two and some meet once or twice a month all year long. This depends on the club and what they want to do. 4-H clubs may organize any time of the year. The 4-H year runs from October 1 to September 30 for 4-H record keeping.

11) Should 4-H clubs have dues?

Clubs are encouraged to develop group fund-raising activities if the club needs money for supplies, trips, etc. Dues can never be used to keep someone from joining 4-H.

12) Where do 4-H clubs meet?

Meetings can be held any place large enough that is convenient for the members of the group. Some clubs take turns meeting in members' homes. Some meet in a center place, such as a school, church, or community center. Some meet in leaders' homes.

13) How big should a club be?

This depends on the age of the members, the places they have to meet and the availability of leaders. The ideal club is big enough to have fun together, but small enough for everyone to feel a part of the group.

4-H LEADERS

14) What is a 4-H Leader?

A 4-H leader is an adult or teen who works voluntarily with a group of 4-H members.

15) Are there different kinds of 4-H leaders?

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, gardening, etc. Adults who help a group get organized and run their meetings are called "Club Leaders."

16) Can the same person be a project leader and a club leader?

Sure- if they have the time and interest. Sometimes big clubs divide these jobs and have several Project Leaders to meet the variety of interests that 4-H members have.

17) What about teenagers who help with 4-H clubs?

Some counties encourage teens to be 4-H leaders. Some teens work with the guidance of an adult and may help with any of the leadership jobs in the club or county. It depends on their abilities and experience. Sometimes older teens decide they would rather take a group of their own and be a leader, rather than a member. They are usually called "Teen Leaders."

18) Where would I learn how to be a 4-H Leader?

The professional staff of Cooperative Extension in your county or region can help you with this. After completing the application process, they would put you on the 4-H leader mailing list, invite you to special training workshops for 4-H leaders and give you the materials you need to organize a 4-H club or interest group. Ask for the name of an experienced leader near you whom you can call if you have questions.

4-H PROJECTS

19) What are 4-H projects?



4-H projects are learning experiences for 4-H members. Cooperative Extension provides educational materials to support 4-H projects. All 4-H materials from the University of Maine are available at minimal or no cost.

20) What does a 4-H project cost?

This varies a great deal. A member enrolled in first aid might use supplies from around the house to practice the skills being learned and have no expense. A member who buys and keeps a saddle horse might invest hundreds or even thousands of dollars. Discuss costs with members as they select a project. It should be realistic to the family situations. Sometimes sponsors or group fund-raising activities helps with expenses.

21) Are 4-H members expected to do their own project work?

Yes – with help. 4-H is a "learn-by-doing" project.

22) What is project judging?

"Judging" is a chance for members to find out how they are doing. This is an optional opportunity- not a requirement. A member's progress (knowledge and skills) may be judged during or at the end of the project experience. This is usually done by the member and their advisor because they know where the member started. The product of a project (animals, garment, etc.) may also be judged. The project is compared to a standard of quality by the advisor or an experienced judge.

23) What is completion?

Completion means that the 4-H member has met the goals that were set when they enrolled. Maine 4-H provides a certificate and pin for members who complete projects.

24) Do 4-Hers do projects individually or as a group?

Both. Some projects, such as outdoor cooking or visiting the seashore, are more fun if done as a group. Others, such as making a vest, will be done individually.

25) What do 4-H clubs do at meetings?

4-H clubs usually do four general kinds of things- project work, business meetings, recreations or social activities and special interest programs.

26) Do they do all of those things at one meeting?

Sometimes, they have a little business to conduct, work on their projects for a while and then play a game or two. Sometimes the whole meeting will be devoted to one activity.

27) Who plans the program for the club?

Members of the club do. If the club is small, this might be done at a meeting of the whole group. If the club is large, get ideas from everybody and let a committee put together a club program from these ideas.

28) When do clubs meet and how long do they last?

This depends on the group. Many clubs meet for an hour or two after school, in the evenings, or on Saturday. The most important thing is to have a regular time that members and their families can remember.

4-H PARENTS

29) How do you explain the role of a 4-H leader to parents?

Be sure they realize leaders are volunteers who are not being paid. Invite them to a 4-H meeting or hold meetings in homes so they can see this role with the club.

30) How do you get parents to help?

Ask them. Be specific about jobs the club needs help with. Think positively. People who expect help will probably get it. Offer a choice of jobs.

4-H builds upon family support to guide the 4-H member in their 4-H experience. Involve parents whenever possible and encourage their participation.

If you would like to know more, contact:

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Updated 9/27/04

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