

4-H FAQs¹

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Q: What is 4-H?

A: 4-H is a nonformal, practical educational program for youth. It is the youth development program of UF/IFAS Extension. 4-H is where there's fun in learning and learning in fun!

Q: What is the mission of 4-H?

A: The UF/IFAS 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, whether they live on farms, in suburbs, or in cities. 4-H serves youth from all backgrounds and interests. It reaches both boys and girls through 4-H clubs, special-interest (SPIN) clubs and short-term projects, individual and family learning and mentoring, camping, and school-based programs. Most 4-H members are from towns and cities and 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, creed, 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 youth 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. Clubs can be community based with a focus on general projects or specific to one project area. Clubs may meet in a variety of ways, such as during an after-school assembly at a community center. Clubs also may meet for shorter period of times to focus on one project (six sessions in a SPIN club) or for the entire year

Q: What happens in a 4-H club?

A: 4-H clubs may focus on a variety of projects and activities of interest to the members. 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 importantly, 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, ages 5–7, can be 4-H Cloverbud members. The 4-H Cloverbud program is a noncompetitive learning experience. Usually, Cloverbud members meet separate from older youth and 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: Florida 4-H requires a membership fee for club members, excluding cloverbuds, which is managed through the 4-H Online enrollment system. The annual state membership fee is \$20. Counties and clubs may choose to charge additional fees to cover curriculum or other activity costs. Uniforms are not required. Many 4-H project resources, activities, and events are available at cost, which is usually minimal.

Q: Where does 4-H get its funding?

A: UF/IFAS Extension, of which 4-H is a part, receives funds from a cooperative partnership of three levels of government: federal (via 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: Professional staff includes at least one county 4-H agent who is a faculty member of the University of Florida and in some counties as program assistant. The county 4-H agent(s) 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 also support local county 4-H professionals and volunteers.

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 the 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 US 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, including the Seminole Tribe. 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 to invest their time to assist with the 4-H program. Families and individuals can become part of 4-H by contacting their local UF/IFAS Extension 4-H office.

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

A: Contact the 4-H staff at your local UF/IFAS Extension office. Visit the UF 4-H website at <http://www.florida4H.org>, or call the State 4-H Office at UF/IFAS (352-846-4444) to obtain the phone number and address of the county 4-H office.