



What is 4-H?



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- While 4-H had its beginnings in rural America, it now serves youth in urban and suburban as well as rural communities. Kansas 4-H is open to youth between the ages of 7 and 19. The new 4-H year starts in October, so many prefer to join 4-H at the start of the school year. 4-H enrollment, however, is open year round, so youth can join any time.
- 4-H is a nationwide program led by state land-grant universities in cooperation with local county/district extension councils. In Kansas, 4-H is the largest youth educational program, aside from public schools.
- Each of the four H's on the clover represent ways youth can grow and develop in 4-H.
 - Head-critical thinking, problem solving.
 - Heart-self-discipline, integrity, communication.
 - Hands-serving others.
 - Health-choosing healthy lifestyles.

4-H Clubs

- In 4-H community clubs, youth have fun with a purpose. Community clubs include youth who enroll in a variety of projects; project club members enroll in the same project. Community clubs typically have structured business meetings, and emphasize community service, recreational activities and improving communication skills.

4-H and Families

- In this busy world, schedules often send family members in a variety of directions. 4-H can bring families together. 4-H families learn together. They plan meetings, events, projects and activities together. Family members help out as club leaders, project leaders, meeting helpers, transportation aides and in a variety of other ways. Parental involvement can help ensure the best learning experience for your child.
- **What do family members say about 4-H?**
 - "In my opinion, 4-H is the best youth organization-it's not gender or age specific. It's a family organization. Today, with so many forces working against the family, 4-H helps build and reinforce the family."
 - "I just can't say enough about 4-H and the affect it has had on my life. The experiences and values I gained were limitless. My children have participated in 4-H and it has been a positive influence in their lives, too. I have been able to be a project leader in their club, so it has been enjoyable for me to give back to an organization from which I received so much."

- **What do 4-H members say about 4-H?**

- "When I think of 4-H, I think of the adult leaders who have given their time for our club. Their devoted example and involvement in our lives has taught me what it means to care, to be committed, to be community-minded and to be creative. 4-H affected my life because it taught me how to be part of other people's lives--it provided wonderful opportunities to meet and know people in my community, county and state."

4-H and the Community

- As part of the 4-H experience, 4-H members are encouraged to learn about and contribute to the betterment of their communities. 4-H also utilizes a variety of community resources to enhance the educational experience of members. Those resources may include meeting places, guest speakers, volunteers and field trips.
- **What do people in the community say about 4-H?**
 - "The 4-H experience provides a huge advantage to kids. The opportunities in 4-H teach them organizational and presentation skills that stand out in the classroom."
 - "I benefited from my experiences as a 4-H member. I might not be doing the things I'm doing today if I hadn't had such positive experiences in 4-H. Giving my time is my way of saying "Thank you.""

Projects

- In 4-H, youth "learn by doing." Much of that learning happens through project experiences. From beef to bicycles...electricity to entomology...forestry to food science...photography to plant science...rabbits to rockets...Kansas 4-H offers 29 project areas designed to develop the wide range of interests that appeal to today's young people. In addition to subject-matter skills, many young people develop interests that last a lifetime.

Life Skills

- Club participation, projects and friendships with other members become memorable parts of the 4-H Program. Equally important are the skills that last a lifetime. Successful adults often credit their experiences in 4-H as turning points in their lives.
- They credit planning, organization and public speaking skills as essential to their success. The Kansas 4-H Program has played a leadership role in identifying the five life skills most needed to help young people.
- Skills learned in 4-H last a lifetime:
 - A positive self-concept.
 - An inquiring mind.
 - A concern for the community.
 - Healthy interpersonal relationships.
 - Sound decision making.

Volunteers

- The 4-H Program, like many other youth groups, relies heavily on volunteers, who are involved in nearly every aspect of the program. More than 16,000 volunteers work directly with 4-H youth throughout the year as club leaders and project specialists. Another 3,500 assist with events, club organization and 4-H promotion.

How can I Join 4-H?

- 4-H membership is open to all youth without discrimination.

How can I Volunteer with 4-H?

- Volunteering to help a group of kids through 4-H can be one of the most rewarding experiences. From being a judge at a local contest to starting and leading a 4-H Club, you and your local Extension Agent can come up with a way to volunteer that fits your interests! To get started, contact your Agent to learn about opportunities in your community.

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.