

# Section I – The 4-H Program

## **What is 4-H?**

4-H is a volunteer led, educational program that supplements the teaching of home, church, and school. It is an informal educational program for all boys and girls 7 to 18 years of age whether they live in town, the country, or on a farm. The state-wide approved ages for participation in Extension 4-H and Youth programs begin with the 7<sup>th</sup> birthday and continue through the calendar year in which the individual is 18 as of January 1.

## **What Is The Primary Objective of 4-H?**

The basic philosophy in 4-H is to strengthen the mental, physical, moral, and social development of boys and girls, therefore helping develop more desirable citizens and leaders. The main objective is the development of boys and girls through participation in projects, events, and various activities.

## **Why Do Youth Enjoy 4-H?**

While all youth are different, they are also alike in many ways. Five inner desires are shared by all youth:

1. They want to belong.
2. They want to achieve.
3. They want to become independent.
4. They want experiences and adventure.
5. They want affection.

The wide variety of “learning by doing” projects, activities, and events, which make up the 4-H program contribute to meeting these needs. Decision-making, individual responsibility, achievement, and recognition further help to make 4-H satisfying.

## **Why and When Did 4-H Originate?**

4-H work, as we know it, began around 1900 as a means of reaching parents with improved farm and home practices. It was based upon the assumption that if new ideas were instilled in the minds of the youngsters they would in turn convince their parents to try these innovations.

The second reason 4-H was developed was because the schools were not meeting the needs and interest of rural youth. The first organized 4-H clubs were small groups covering a single topic such as beef, corn, gardening, and canning. There were corn, poultry and garden clubs in Kansas as early as 1905. The first county agents were hired about 1915 and the first Kansas state 4-H leader was hired in 1916.



## Have 4-H Objectives Changed Since Its Early Days?

Yes! Following the “teach improved practices to farmers and homemakers through their children” idea, came World War I and the “food for victory” theme. Following the war, the “keep them on the farm” objective was foremost in people’s minds. Food production was emphasized again during World War II.

Today the objective is the development of boys and girls, providing a wide variety of learning opportunities in which all youth can participate. 4-H today is for all kids, whether they live in the city or in the country. Fifty percent of Douglas County’s 4-H’ers have an urban address.

## Who Is Responsible For The Administration Of The 4-H Program?

The Cooperative Extension Service is a cooperative undertaking by the United States Department of Agriculture, the land-grant colleges (Kansas State University), and the county extension councils.

The extension service provides up-to-date information from the classroom and laboratory to the people of the state. Extension brings back to the university problems, which can be solved by careful study and research.

The purpose of the county extension service is to provide instruction and practical demonstrations in agriculture, marketing, home economics, 4-H and youth development, and community resources development to all persons in the county. The county extension councils hire college trained agents in agriculture, home economics, and 4-H and youth to plan and conduct the respective programs in the county.

## What is a 4-H Club?

A 4-H Club is a group of youth organized with officers appropriate to the group with one or more leaders under the sponsorship of the Cooperative Extension Service. The club is organized within a neighborhood, a school, a church, a business or social unit. The size of the club should be suitable to the age of the members, meeting place and leadership available. This type of club is called a community 4-H Club.

Also, youth are 4-H members by taking part in project clubs (one subject), special interest groups, school enrichment programs and Afterschool 4-H programs.

## Motto

*“To Make The Best Better”*

## Emblem

The 4-H Emblem is the four-leaf clover with the letter “H” on each leaf, standing for head, heart, hands, and health.



## Colors

The 4-H colors are green and white. Green symbolizes nature's most common color and represents life, spring time and youth. White symbolizes purity.

## 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 Year

A new 4-H year starts October 1 and ends September 30 of the following year.

## Age of Membership

4-H membership is open to all youth who are 7 years of age and have not passed their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday by January 1 of the current year.

## Scope

4-H is in all the states and in many foreign countries. Over 80 foreign countries have 4-H or 4-H type youth programs.

## Projects

Other than age, the only requirement for 4-H membership is that the 4-H'er enrolls in at least one project. There are nearly 50 project areas to choose from. Members are expected to complete the projects in which they enroll.

## Leaders

Adults serve as two types of 4-H leaders: project (subject matter teachers) and community (organization leaders). Helping youth grow through their 4-H opportunities can be a very rewarding experience for adult volunteers.



# NOTES

