



WISCONSIN 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Participation • Membership • Youth Protection • Safety • Financial

September 2015

PARTICIPATION

A. Youth Participation Options

1. Youth may participate in the Wisconsin 4-H Youth Development program through:
 - a. Membership in a 4-H club
 - b. Participation in a special interest/activity/group/program sponsored by University of Wisconsin-Extension
2. Additional participation options may be offered at county discretion:
 - a. Affiliation with an organized 4-H project
 - b. School enrichment

B. Adult Participation Options

1. Adult volunteers serve in a variety of educational and organizational roles that provide quality positive 4-H youth development programs for youth such as:
 - a. Voting members on 4-H committees
 - b. Organizational leadership roles on 4-H leaders association groups
 - c. Chaperones for 4-H youth development experiences. Adult volunteers over 21 can serve as chaperones.

4-H Youth Development volunteers, including chaperones must complete the Youth Protection Process and be actively enrolled.

2. Parent/guardian(s) are encouraged to actively participate in 4-H youth development activities and experiences in supportive roles with their children. Parent/guardian(s) must complete the Youth Protection Process and be actively enrolled to serve as a 4-H Youth Development volunteer.

MEMBERSHIP

A. Enrollment Policies

1. The Wisconsin 4-H membership year is October 1 – September 30.
2. 4-H has open enrollment. Youth may enroll at any time of the year. Counties may establish enrollment and reenrollment deadlines for participation in programs when those deadlines are needed to ensure educational integrity and/or safety. This includes participation in county fairs and/or animal projects.
3. 4-H membership is open to all youth beginning in 5K (five-year-old Kindergarten) through one year beyond high school graduation and not to extend beyond the age of 19 as of December 31 of the enrollment year.

Cloverbud Project – Youth in 5K – 2nd grade participate in the Cloverbud project which is designed to meet the developmental needs of this age group. This does not include pre-kindergarten or four-year-old kindergarten youth. Cloverbud project members are not allowed to exhibit animals at public events nor participate in shooting sports activities.

3. Leadership for 4-H Clubs is primarily provided by volunteers. A 4-H Club may have paid leadership when the individual provides leadership for the club as a function of their employment for another organization. Teen leadership does not meet the adult leadership requirement.
4. 4-H Clubs must have an educational mission. Evidence can be provided in different ways. The preferred method is for clubs to develop a program plan with their members, and provide a written copy of that plan to the members and the county UW-Extension office through the annual 4-H Charter renewal process.

“Youth involvement in leadership and decision making” emphasizes that 4-H Clubs belong to the membership and the youth members should make the decisions. Adult leaders should not be making the decisions for the members. Many Clubs operate with officers, however they are not required.

“Continuing basis” means that a 4-H Club intends to carry on as a functioning unit indefinitely. The Club may determine for itself the frequency and timing of its meetings. Clubs that don’t meet in the summer, or November – February are acceptable if they continue as a 4-H Club the next year. They don’t completely disband at the beginning of the summer. Rather they continue to exist with leadership and an identity and program again in the fall. Likewise a school 4-H Club that meets every school year as the 5th grade class Club would also be acceptable, even though all of the members change each year.

5. 4-H Club written operating guidelines or by-laws need to include at minimum the following: the group’s purpose/mission; a statement of compliance with state and national 4-H policies and laws; the approved civil rights statements; information on how the group is organized and makes decisions; the required dissolution clause; and procedures of how finances are handled and audited.
6. All 4-H Clubs/Units/Groups must comply with federal and state nondiscrimination laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

REQUIREMENTS FOR A 4-H UNIT/GROUP/COMMITTEE CHARTER

1. The University of Wisconsin-Extension grants 4-H Charters to units/groups/committees (Group), which formally recognize a Group's affiliation with 4-H, and grant that Group the permission to use the 4-H Name and Emblem. 4-H Charter and Charter renewals provide documentation that a 4-H Group complies with state and federal laws and federal, university and state 4-H policies and guidelines. All Groups that handle finances and have a checkbook must be chartered. To be a chartered 4-H Group in Wisconsin, the Group must complete the Charter Application. 4-H Charters must be renewed annually. The following requirements must be met and maintained:
 - a. Unit/Group/Committee name
 - b. Adult leadership that has been approved through the Youth Protection process
 - c. Educational plan which meets the purposes of the 4-H program
 - d. Youth involvement in leadership and decision-making
 - e. Meet on a continuing basis
 - f. Have written operating guidelines, bylaws or constitution approved by the members to govern the unit/group/committee
 - g. Open to any youth eligible for 4-H membership, regardless of race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, disability, ancestry, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital or parental status.
2. Failure of a 4-H Group to meet these requirements may result in the loss of the 4-H Charter and the use of the 4-H Name and Emblem. Annual 4-H Charter renewal packets are due to the local UW-Extension Office no later than November 1. Individual Counties may have an earlier deadline.
3. 4-H Group written operating guidelines or by-laws need to include at minimum the following: the Group’s purpose/mission; a statement of compliance with state and national 4-H policies and laws; the approved civil rights statements; information on how the group is organized and makes decisions; the required dissolution clause; and procedures of how finances are handled and audited.

of the record. Restriction of volunteer driving privileges will be communicated in writing by either state or county staff.

10. If a volunteer applicant has lived in Wisconsin for less than three years, references will be sought and checked. If a volunteer lives outside Wisconsin, references will be sought and checked.
11. Parents and guardians are expected to behave in ways that promote positive role modeling for all youth. If 4-H youth development staff have reason to believe a youth or a parent/guardian has engaged in reckless or disruptive behavior at a 4-H meeting or event sponsored by UW-Extension or engaged in behavior at any time that constitutes criminal child abuse or neglect, that educator will inform that youth or parent/guardian of his/her reasons for that belief and direct that individual not to attend 4-H meetings or events sponsored by UW-Extension. Such a youth or a parent/guardian may not attend 4-H meetings or events sponsored by UW-Extension until such time as the youth or parent/guardian provides reliable evidence that he/she did not engage in such conduct.

SAFETY

A. Program Safety Regulations

1. Adults and youth participating in all high risk programs, including horses, ATV, bicycle, rock climbing/rappelling, rollerblading, and ropes adventure courses must wear protective clothing, head and foot gear. Minimum requirements for these programs:
 - a. Protective head gear (SEI approved for the specific activity) which properly fits the participant.
 - b. Shoes or boots which provide protection from the hazards of said program.
 - c. Clothing appropriate for the activity which will protect the participants from the elements surrounding the event.

The policy means that all 4-H members and leaders (adult or youth) participating in the mentioned projects and/or activities need to use protective or safety equipment while participating. Approved safety helmets need to be worn while mounted or driving a horse, operating a bicycle or ATV, on roller blades, rock climbing or doing a challenge course.

2. If a 4-H club is listed as a sponsor or co-sponsor of an activity which includes the above listed projects, grade exhibit policies (youth must be in 3rd grade) and the helmet and safety equipment requirements apply for all participants. This includes adults as they need to be positive role models.

The goal of this policy is educational. We need to work for a safe environment for our youth. In the volunteer orientation program, the need for a safe environment is discussed. Therefore, if safety equipment which significantly reduces serious injuries is available, why would we not use it?

These standards apply to all 4-H activities, regardless of location. Meeting these standards may require the selection of an alternative site, or requiring the use of additional safety equipment, even though it is not standard practice for the facility where the 4-H activity is to occur. If these safety requirements are not followed, then the particular event is not eligible to use the 4-H Name and Emblem, nor will it be recognized as a UW-Extension program.

Should people decide not to comply, they need to be disqualified from the competition or asked to at least dismount, if during a non-competitive activity. When adults are serving in a leadership role, they are expected to meet the same safety requirements as the youth. If leaders fail to comply with the safety policy and individuals are participating without proper safety equipment and an injury occurs, the leader may be found negligent and application of liability insurance coverage would be questionable. This is a consequence which needs serious consideration.

Any classes which require 4-H membership to enter, or serves as a qualifying event for regional or state competition must adhere to these safety policies.

It is strongly encouraged that 4-H groups set an example of using proper safety equipment and maintaining the highest standards of injury prevention.

volunteer leaders. 4-H volunteer leader and member participation will be consistent with state and county guidelines.

8. If a 4-H volunteer leader is acting in an unsafe manner or is in noncompliance with 4-H volunteer leader standards, he or she is subject to removal.
9. Regarding UW System firearms and weapons policy changes, the following authorization on February 9, 2012, allows staff and 4-H Shooting Sports volunteer leaders to conduct 4-H Shooting Sports programming:

"As authorized by the Dean of Cooperative Extension, the carrying of firearms, air guns, bows and arrows is allowed by University of Wisconsin-Extension, Cooperative Extension Employees and 4-H Youth Development Shooting Sports Volunteers while acting in the scope of their duties and Wisconsin 4-H Youth Development Policy. We expect all guns for 4-H Shooting Sports to be carried openly in designated areas."

10. Paintball Policy -- 9/28/10

"The purpose of the 4-H Shooting Sports Program is to promote youth development through the safe and responsible use of archery equipment and firearms. Pointing any type of firearm including air guns, paintball guns, laser guns or laser sighting devices at any person or any humanoid or tombstone target is inappropriate and dangerous. Therefore the Wisconsin 4-H Shooting Sports Committee is unequivocally opposed to such use in the 4-H Shooting Sports program".

FINANCIAL

A. Financial

1. Regardless of the source, all 4-H funds must be used for 4-H Youth Development educational programs. All 4-H funds are public funds and must be publicly accountable. Federal regulations governing the use of the 4-H Name and Emblem require annual financial reporting/accountability of all organized 4-H clubs/units/groups. Failure to annually submit the financial report could result in loss of the 4-H club/unit/group charter.
2. The Wisconsin 4-H fiscal year is defined as July 1 – June 30.
3. For the purposes of this policy, "excess 4-H funds" are assets in excess of a chartered 4-H Club/Unit/Group's projected expenditures for two years, or \$1,000, whichever is greater. Chartered 4-H Clubs/Units/Groups shall hold no excess 4-H funds, unless that money is being saved for a specific programmatic objective that must be accomplished within five years and has been approved by the 4-H Youth Development Educator.
4. As with all public funds, there are specific rules and regulations that must be followed to ensure proper use and minimal risk. With the oversight from the 4-H Youth Development Educator, 4-H Clubs/Units/Groups have the following options for depositing or investing funds. These are listed in the order of preference.

Option A: FDIC or NCUA Institution: Funds may be deposited or invested in a FDIC (Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation) or NCUA (National Credit Union Administration) insured institution. This option includes the use of savings accounts, checking accounts, money market accounts, and certificates of deposit.

Option B: The *Wisconsin 4-H Foundation*: Funds may be invested in an endowment fund made available according to the *Wisconsin 4-H Foundation* policies to produce long-term stable support for a 4-H group, club or program.

Option C: County UW-Extension Account: Funds may be deposited in an authorized county UW-Extension account. This must be done pursuant to a written agreement with county government and with written approval from UW-Extension. These funds may eventually be transferred to a 4-H

D. Multi-County, Regional and State Committees and Councils

1. **Reporting Requirement:** All multi-county, regional and state committees and councils are required to be chartered and to submit a financial record and an audit of the record to the advising 4-H Youth Development Agent or State UW-Extension Specialist once each year. Additional reports required by law must be submitted to the respective agencies and a copy filed with the advising 4-H Youth Development staff or State UW-Extension Specialist.
2. **Dissolution Clause:** Multi-county, regional and state committees, councils, and unit/groups must include a statement of dissolution in their written operating guidelines or bylaws similar to the following: Upon dissolution of the committee or council, any assets remaining shall be conveyed to a 4-H Youth Development program or 4-H Youth Development Foundation as selected by the affirmative vote of the majority of committee or council members entitled to vote.