

2026

Elkhart County *4-H Welcome Guide*



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4-H Mission & Vision

4-H Mission: The Indiana 4-H Youth Development mission is to provide real-life educational opportunities that develop young people who will have a positive impact their communities and the world.

4-H Vision: Indiana 4-H Youth Development mission strives to be the premier, community-based program empowering young people to reach their full potential.

4-H is unique because it is the only youth organization tied to the research base of our nation's land-grant university system. This connection allows Purdue Extension Staff and the volunteers they work with to receive training based on the most up-to-date research on youth development theory and practice.¹

In Indiana, 4-H can be found in all 92 counties as delivered through *Purdue Extension*. Purdue Extension is the outreach link between local communities, the land grant universities, and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Since 1914, this educational system has assisted in the well-being and productivity of people throughout the United States.

4-H has been around for more than 100 years and has become the largest youth development program in the nation. It prepares young people for leadership and exposes them to hands-on experiences alongside peers and caring leaders. With a network of more than 6 million youth and over 60 million alumni; 4-H fosters a positive youth development program. You can get involved through community clubs, afterschool programs, school enrichment, camps/workshops, and other special programs!

4-H'ers are...



Emblem

The 4-H emblem is the four-leaf clover with the letter “H” on each leaf. The H's stand for head, heart, hands, and health. The 4-H emblem is legally protected and must be used correctly.

Colors

The 4-H colors are green and white.

Motto

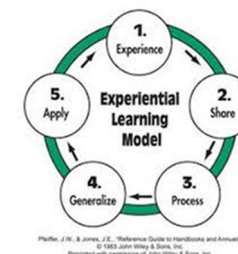
“To make the best better.”

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.

Learning Model

Young people learn best when they are actively involved in the learning process, 4-H programs are designed to provide hands-on educational experiences that are reinforced through personal and group reflection and application “do-reflect-apply.” This is “Experiential Learning.”



Dates to Remember!

Below are important events that take place throughout the year

(not all events are listed below)

October 1st <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4-H Enrollment Opens for grades K-12 Enroll at https://v2.4honline.com/
January 15th <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scholarship Applications are due
May 15th <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Add/Drop Deadline in 4-H online Animal ID Deadline Fair Entry Opens 4-H Round-Up registration 4-H Academy registration
June 1st <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4-H Camp 4-H Round Up YQCA/Quality Assurance Completion Deadline Fair Entry Deadline Mini 4-H Livestock Camp Mini 4-H Day Camp Youth Awards Deadline
July <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4-H Achievement Scholarship Due (4-H'ers in their Senior year of High School) Animal Science Day Camp Millie Christofeno Perseverance Award Application Deadline Project Check in—See July Calendar Elkhart County 4-H Fair Time!



4-H Friday Nugget

The 4-H Friday Nugget is sent electronically twice each month, usually the first and third Friday. You may access it via email, on our website, or by requesting a hard copy at the Extension Office. Please read the 4-H Nugget carefully and keep it handy to know about 4-H news! It can be found on the Elkhart County Extension Website under "Resources for Current 4-H members"



4-H Clubs

4-H clubs are groups of youth and adults who meet on a regular basis and together practice positive youth development and cooperative learning. Clubs traditionally meet once a month. Some clubs meet year-round, some start in the winter. Each club elects officers from the club membership. The officers conduct the business portion of the club meeting.

4-Hers may belong to any 4-H Club in the county. Residence does not restrict club membership. All Clubs should strive to create a quality learning environment for youth that give members a chance to be an active part of the club, to enhance life skills, and to promote positive youth development throughout all activities.

In Elkhart County, we have two main types of 4-H Clubs:

General

General clubs cover a broad range of topics within the 4-H Program

Subject-Specific

Subject-Specific clubs focus more on a specific subject area. Beef Club, Shooting Sports, and Media are all examples.

Youth may participate in many clubs depending on their interests. It is recommended that if a youth is involved in a project where a related club exists, that they be involved with that club as well since many of those club meetings will help the youth understand that topic. Other things to consider when selecting a club are: location, dates of meetings, youth availability, size of club you are comfortable with, and areas of interest.

4-H Parent/Guardian Information

Time Commitment:

One 4-H year includes about 1-2 hours per month for club meetings and whatever time you choose each week for 4-H project work. You will have a better experience if you put more time into your project!

Cost:

The State Program Fee for 4-H is \$20 per member for members in 3rd-12th grade. There is a \$60 cap on State Program Fees. So, if you have four or more 4-H members in your family, you will only pay the \$60 fee.

Mini 4-H (grades K-2) is free!

Responsibilities:

- Help your child enroll in 4-H clubs and select one or more projects to complete to fulfill 4-H requirements
- Make sure your child attends 4-H club meetings
- Provide or arrange for transportation
- Help your child to complete any 4-H responsibilities for which he/she has volunteered
- Help out at 4-H club activities during the 4-H year!
- Support your child's 4-H project work



Mini 4-H

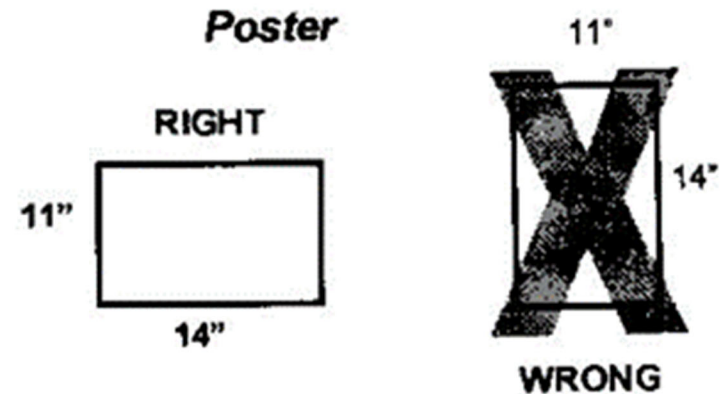
Mini 4-H is a program for any child who is in Kindergarten-2nd grade. Mini 4-H'ers are not required to attend meetings but are encouraged to attend the special activities planned for them. There is no competition in the Mini 4-H program. There are 17 Mini 4-H projects. Mini 4-H'ers can select up to two projects to complete each year.

Mini 4-H Projects:

Arts & Crafts	Foods
Beef	Forestry
Bicycle	Models
Bugs	Pets
Collections	Photography
Cake Decorating	Sewing
Dinosaurs	Tractor
Farm Animals	Wildlife
Flowers & Garden	

Mini 4-H Poster Requirements:

Mini 4-H posters must be exactly 11 X 14 inches, displayed horizontally (wider than it is tall) and attached to a stiff backing. You may use foam board. Foam board is already stiff and does not require additional backing. Posters must be covered with clear plastic such as a poster sleeve. Foam boards and poster sleeves can be purchased at the Extension Office while supplies last.



 **4-H GROWS HERE**

4-H Projects

The Elkhart County 4-H program offers a vast array of projects to choose from. Some projects are specific to certain clubs but many can be completed in any club.

Manuals and project information can all be found on the Purdue Extension Elkhart County website or picked up from the Extension Office.

Many projects require various materials for completion, these items may include a 22" x 28" poster, photography salon board, or cake board, all of which can be purchased at the Extension Office while supplies last.

4-H Projects:

Achievement Record Book	Health
Aerospace	Home Environment
Animal Posters (Animal Education)	Horse & Pony*
Arts & Crafts (includes 17 options)	Junior Leaders*
ATV Safety*	Lamb (Sheep)*
Auto Mechanics*	Lawn/Garden Tractor Operator Skills*
Beef*	Media*
Beekeeping	Microwave Cooking
Bicycle*	Performing Arts
Blacksmithing	Pet Animal (Animal Education)
Cake Decorating	Photography
Cat*	Remote Control
Child Development	Poultry*
Collections	Rabbit*
Computer	Sewing
Consumer Clothing	Shooting Sports*
Dairy*	Small Engine
Dairy Feeder Calf*	Soil and Water Science
Dog*	Sportfishing*
Electric	Sports
Entomology	Swine*
Fashion Revue	Tractor Operator Skills*
Floriculture	Veterinary Science
Foods: Baked & Preserved	Weather and Climate Science
Forestry	Wildlife
Garden	Woodworking
Genealogy	Zero Turn-Mower & Operator Skills*
Geology	
Goat*	

*requires participation in a subject-specific Elkhart County 4-H Club

4-H Ribbons

State Fair (Purple)

This is the best overall exhibit in a division, section, or category and has been selected for exhibit at the Indiana State Fair.



Champion (Purple)

This is the best overall exhibit in a division, section, or category where a State Fair entry does not exist, and it is awarded when merited. Example: A champion ribbon is awarded to Microwave Cooking because it is a county project and not available on the state level.



Reserve Champion (Lavender)

This is the second best overall exhibit in a division, section, or category and is awarded when merited.



Honor Group (Purple)

This ribbon is given to first place group recipients that have done an out-standing job. State Fair winners and Champions are selected from this group.



Group A (Blue)

First place group. Meets all requirements, and project work is very good.



Group B (Red)

Second place group. Project work is good but does not meet requirements in some way and/or is missing an important element.



Group C (White)

Third place group. Does not meet requirements and is missing two or more important elements.



Participation (Green)

Given to a late entry project that arrives after judging is finished. All projects are to be checked in at the designated times.



Mini 4-H (Light Green)

Given to Mini 4-H youth in grades K – 2 that complete a project.



Special Activity (Yellow)

Given for special activities participated in during the year, such as Performing Arts.



Ribbons and judges' comments are available to be picked up during the fair in the ECCC (4-H Exhibit Building) kitchen during building hours.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Who can participate in 4-H?

Traditional 4-H is for those that are in 3rd through 12th grade. Mini 4-H is a noncompetitive version of 4-H for those in K, 1st and 2nd grades.

How many projects can I do?

Traditional 4-H has no limit on the number of projects that you can participate in each year. We encourage youth to take a number they are comfortable with and can complete within the year.

Mini 4-H is limited to two projects.

How do I know what projects I can take?

See our website:

<https://extension.purdue.edu/county/elkhart/4-h.html>

or contact the Purdue Extension Office to know what is available.

What is Fair Entry and how do I enter my projects?

You can access Fair Entry by visiting <https://elkhartcountyin.fairentry.com>. This platform is used to manage fair exhibit data, track 4-H results, and ensure all projects and animals are properly checked into our fair data.

Are there any other fees associated with 4-H?

Project Supplies, Trips and some 4-H Activities will require additional fees.

Can I add or drop projects?

Yes! You may add or drop projects up until May 15th! You may simply do so on 4-HOnline, or call the Extension Office at 574-533-0554.

How do I contact someone if I have questions?

You are more than welcome to contact the Extension Office at 574-533-0554 or elkhartces@purdue.edu. Club leaders are also a great resource!

How do I enroll?


Log in to <https://v2.4honline.com> to enroll! If you would like additional help, prefer a paper copy or would like the use of a computer, visit us at the Extension Office M-F 8AM-4:30PM.

What is a club? When do they meet?

A club is a group of kids that meet together to answer questions, conduct business, and learn new skills. Meeting times vary. Please see our website for more information: [4-H Clubs](#)

Follow us Here!

 Facebook: "Elkhart County 4-H"

 Instagram: "purdueextelkhart"

Elkhart County 4-H website:

<https://extension.purdue.edu/county/elkhart/4-h.html>

Purdue Cooperative Extension Service – Elkhart County

Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday



Elkhart County 4-H Fairgrounds

17746 County Road 34 Ste E

Goshen, IN 46528-6898

574-533-0554



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4-H Online vs. FairEntry



When do we need to use them?
Why do we use them both?

4-H Online

FairEntry

Who?

- Parents/ Families
- ALL 4-H Members
- ALL Program Volunteers
- Specialty Groups

Who?

- 4-H Fair Exhibitors
- Superintendents
- Fair Judges
- Check-in Volunteers
- Media Outlets for Fair Results

What?

- Animal Identification
- Selecting project areas to explore.
- 4-H Trips and other events
- 4-H Scholarships Application
- Club rosters for 4-H Leaders

What?

- Preparation for county fair
- County Fair Project Labels
- State Fair Qualifying Entries
- Livestock Show Bills
- Organization of Fair Results

When?

From start to end of the program year: October through September.

When?

Fair Season: Typically May through August

Where?

<https://v2.4honline.com/>

Where?

Direct link provided by county office
or
<https://faireentry.com/Public/FindYourFair>

Why?

- To express interest in the 4-H Program
- Improved communication between County and State and 4-H Families

Why?

- Prepare for county and state fair
- Get accurate numbers for project display purposes, and stall assignments



Extension - 4-H Youth Development



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