

# WHAT IS 4-H?



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## INDIANA 4-H LEADER GUIDE

Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service • West Lafayette, IN

Congratulations on your decision and willingness to become a 4-H leader. As a 4-H leader you will face both responsibilities and opportunities. 4-H members will look to you as their friend, teacher, guide, and helper. Your job will be challenging and will take time and effort. You will gain untold satisfactions as you see boys and girls grow and develop!

You may have been a 4-H member yourself, or you may have heard of 4-H only recently. As a leader you will want to know what the 4-H program is all about today. Let's look at it.

### Definition and Purpose

4-H is a voluntary, educational program designed to meet the needs and interests of boys and girls. 4-H members, parents, and leaders have great fun in learning and working together in club activities, project groups, special interest groups, and endless special interest events. Specifically, 4-H programs help the individual:

- Develop leadership skills.
- Gain knowledge and skills in various projects or activities.
- Become self-reliant.
- Use scientific methods to create and solve problems.
- Explore careers.

The emblem is a four-leaf clover with an H in each leaf. This symbol is well known, yet it means different things to different people. The letters in the emblem stand for Head, Heart, Hands, and Health – the foundation of all 4-H programs. As a leader you'll help your members develop their:

**HEAD** – learning to think, making decisions, understanding the “why’s,” and gaining new and valuable knowledge.

**HEART** – being concerned with the welfare of others, accepting the responsibilities of citizenship, determining values and attitudes by which to live, and learning how to work with others.

**HANDS** – learning new skills, perfecting skills already known, and developing pride in work and respect for it.

**HEALTH** – practicing healthful living, protecting the well-being of self and others, and making constructive use of leisure time.

These together are a fourfold development. Each leaf, each H, is vital to every individual. You need to make sure all four of the H's become equally important to your members.

### Who Can Be a 4-H Member?

Youth of all races, places of residence, socioeconomic situations, and educational backgrounds are welcome. Youth may become 4-H members when they enter the third grade. They may continue membership until August 31st of the year they complete the 12th grade. Maximum membership is 10 years.

### What Makes 4-H Different?

4-H is real life experience. It is learning how to do jobs and how to make decisions similar to those that are important in adult life.

4-H can be a family affair. There is a place for all family members if they want to participate. Sometimes you can reach and teach others: friends, parents, brothers,

and sisters through the 4-H'ers in "your" club.

4-H is adaptable. Programs can be and should be "tailored" to fit any individual, any home, or any community. That's part of the fun. You can help your club "cut and fit" the program so that everyone gains from the experience.

4-H is decision making. Learning to stand on one's own feet and learning to work with a group are important. Early practice in making both personal and group decisions builds for the future. You help members find possible answers. You encourage them to explore and decide which path they will follow.

4-H provides for ownership. Making, buying, and selling are included. Each project "belongs" to the member.

4-H is based on science and fact. The resources of Purdue University, our Indiana land-grant college, are used consistently in developing and implementing projects and activities.

4-H is a part of the community. A club becomes involved with improving economic and social conditions where the members live. They learn how to be good citizens by taking community responsibility.

4-H is "learning by doing." It's an action program. Participants watch others, they study, they experiment, but they "do and practice" themselves. People remember 20 percent of what they are told, 30 percent of what they see, 50 percent of what they hear, 70 percent of what they say, and 90 percent of what they do and think. 4-H offers much **DOING AND THINKING!**

### **What Makes 4-H Possible?**

4-H is a combination of many things: people (members, leaders, parents, Extension educators, Extension specialists, and others), finances, and community support to name a few.

Let's look more closely. 4-H is tax supported. The combined efforts of the county, state, and federal governments have permitted 4-H to develop into a practical,



educational program based on everyday living.

Your club and every club member and leader is a part of the Cooperative Extension Service of Purdue University and the United States Department of Agriculture.

Your Extension educators are staff members of Purdue University. You, the 4-H leader, are considered volunteer staff of the university.

Your county commissioners help support 4-H by providing office space, secretarial assistance, supplies, and other financial help for your county Cooperative Extension Service office. The National 4-H Council in Washington, D.C. cooperates with local and state 4-H programs as it provides national leadership.

### **4-H Reaches Around the World**

More than 6 million boys and girls in the United States belong to 4-H. There are about 45 million 4-H alumni. More than 80 countries throughout the world have 4-H type programs. They may be called different names (4 S in South America, 4 K in Turkey, Young Farmers' Club in England and New Zealand), but they have the same goal: the growth and development of boys and girls to the greatest capacity. You are one of more than 14,000 volunteer leaders guiding some 4,500 4-H clubs/activities in Indiana. More than 240,000 boys and girls are involved in 4-H programming in Indiana. We have many more youth who would like this opportunity.

The Indiana 4-H Program is only as good as the combined local clubs. You and your members are the heart of the program. What is done in your local community with your 4-H members and their families determines whether 4-H has meaning and value. You never know the far reaching effects you, one member, or one group may have even around the world. 4-H is like the small stone thrown into the pond. Eventually the impact of that one small object reaches far away shores.

### **4-H Symbols and Traditions**

You will hear the basic purposes of 4-H stated in many different ways. The 4-H clover, pledge, motto, and other symbols and traditions have helped identify 4-H for many years.

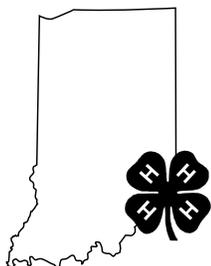
**4-H Colors:** It is most appropriate that green and white are the colors of 4-H. The green in the 4-H clover represents life, springtime, and youth. The white represents purity.

**4-H Slogan:** The slogan to "Learn by Doing" is a constant incentive to motivate 4-H'ers to strive toward acquiring

new skills and knowledge. The results can mean a very productive and interesting life.

**4-H Motto:** “To Make the Best Better” is the goal of each member. The motto gives a special motivation not to be content with the present, but to always strive to make things better.

**4-H Pledge:** The 4-H pledge was officially adopted in 1927. The pledge has been changed only once. In 1973, “my world” was added to the end of the pledge. It has stood the test of time, is educationally sound, and states the true purpose of 4-H. Let’s look at the pledge and its meaning by examining some key thoughts under each H.

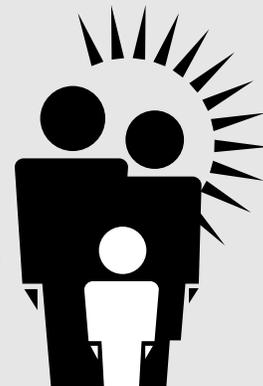
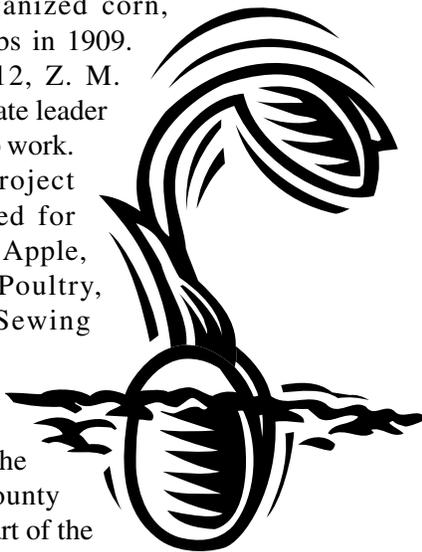


### Some Indiana 4-H History

On April 9, 1904, John Haines, superintendent of Hamilton County Schools, held a meeting for all boys interested in learning to grow corn. Mr. Haines is thus credited with planning the first junior club in Indiana. The record states, “Mr. Haines visited the projects, held two instruction meetings, and his members exhibited at the end of the year.”

H. L. Rogers, superintendent of Pulaski County Schools, organized corn, poultry, and butter clubs in 1909. On September 1, 1912, Z. M. Smith was appointed state leader of Boys’ and Girls’ club work. During this year, project outlines were prepared for Gardening, Canning, Apple, Tomato, Potato, Poultry, Breadmaking, and Sewing projects.

By 1918, Mr. Smith had made the recommendation that the club program for a county should be an integral part of the county agricultural Extension program.



## I pledge:

### My Head to Clearer Thinking-

- Strives for intelligent behavior
- Develops lifelong skills for living
- Offers experiences in the decision making process
- Teaches “how” to think rather than “what” to think

### My Heart to Greater Loyalty -

- Instills trust and respect
- Strengthens personal standards by which to live
- Helps to understand others who may seem “different”
- Develops lasting friendships

### My Hands to Larger Service -

- Provides a working experience
- Teaches there is dignity in work
- Develops eye and hand coordination
- Instills a concern for others through community service projects

### My Health to Better Living -

- Relates to both physical and mental health
- Teaches wise use of leisure time
- Helps with decisions of career choice
- Develops an understanding about the need for a clean and healthy environment

### For My Club, My Community, My Country, and My World -

- Provides learning experiences that are worldwide
- Teaches that you are a part and that you belong
- Shows that a relationship between community and world does exist
- Develops citizenship by acting responsibly

Usually, the 4-H pledge is said at the opening of a 4-H meeting. Members should do more than just “mouth the words.” Involve members in the discussion and meaning of the pledge. This will help assure that when your club gives the pledge, it will be said with meaning, understanding, and purpose.

The first 4-H club projects (market hogs) were exhibited at the Indiana State Fair in 1915. In 1912, the beef and canning projects were added to the state exhibits. In 1922, lambs and sewing projects were exhibited for the first time.

The first annual 4-H Roundup was held at Purdue University April 21-24, 1919. The first 4-H camp in Indiana was held near Evansville in Vanderburgh County in 1922 with 840 youth and 150 leaders in attendance.

The first State 4-H Leader Training School was held at Camp Tecumseh and Camp Bedford in 1925. In 1939, Statewide Leader Training sponsored by Rotary International began.

The Indiana 4-H Foundation was established in 1962.

### Local 4-H Club

The basic unit of 4-H is the local 4-H club. The club provides the unit for members to enroll and become active in 4-H related activities. 4-H clubs may be organized by project areas, within a community or neighborhood, or within a school. This group is responsible for the local 4-H program.



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### County Extension Service

County Extension educators are professionals employed cooperatively by county commissioners, Purdue University, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Offices are maintained in each of Indiana's 92 counties. Extension educators are "off campus" staff of Purdue University. 4-H is the primary Extension program in youth education. Educators are responsible for county 4-H programs and serve as resource people for local 4-H programs.

### Purdue Cooperative Extension Service

State 4-H staff, subject matter specialists, and other state staff in administration and communications are the "on campus" staff responsible for the state Extension youth program. They provide resource help for county and local 4-H programs.

### Purdue University

As the land-grant college of Indiana, Purdue is the institution charged by law with the responsibility for extending education to the people of the state. Close ties

between the schools of Agriculture and Consumer and Family Sciences unite research, resident teaching, and Extension personnel, so that resources of the entire university are available to Extension youth programs. Much of the research information used in writing 4-H project manuals comes from Purdue University.

### Cooperative Extension Service U.S. Department of Agriculture

The Families, 4-H, and Nutrition division of the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) is responsible for the national 4-H program. Housed in the Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C., this staff provides resource assistance to state, county, and local 4-H programs. The division collects and interprets research in youth education.

### So, What's It Really All About?

4-H is a combination of essential features: boys and girls – with a "desire to do," and leaders, like yourself – with a "desire to guide."



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The Indiana 4-H Program offers these additional 4-H Leader Guides:

- 4-H 683 4-H Program Planning
- 4-H 684 The 4-H Meeting
- 4-H 685 Parents
- 4-H 686 Recreation
- 4-H 687 Teaching Techniques
- 4-H 688 Fund Raising in 4-H

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