



Maryland 4-H Club Charter Guidelines

Charter status is the highest standard for 4-H clubs in the Maryland 4-H program. 4-H clubs which reach this status are eligible to be awarded an official charter which is presented on behalf of the United States Department of Agriculture and The University of Maryland (Maryland's State Land-Grant University). This Charter is signed by the Secretary of USDA, University of Maryland Extension Director and other appropriate administrators. When the 4-H Club charter is awarded, the club has the authority to use the 4-H name and emblem for educational purposes and goals.

4-H Chartered Clubs are expected to meet the guidelines and requirements outlined by the University of Maryland Extension 4-H Youth Development Program. Any use of the 4-H name and emblem is forbidden if it exploits the 4-H programs, its volunteers, 4-H youth participants, USDA, UME, or its employees.

4-H Club Charter Requirements

Have a minimum of five members between the ages of eight and 18. (Members should be at least eight years old as of January 1 and not have passed their 18 th birthday on January 1.)
Membership meets the Affirmative Action guidelines for new 4-H clubs according to the University of Maryland Extension Plan for Compliance and other anti-discrimination laws and guidelines.
Be organized with elected officers, such as president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer.
Have at least one UME (formally MCE) volunteer organizational leader and UME (formally MCE) volunteer project leaders as appropriate.
Have at least six or more regularly scheduled club meetings per year.
Have a written planned educational program that provides a variety of learning experiences.
Have a set of BY-LAWS developed by the club and a Federal EIN tax number.

4-H Clover Club Requirements

Clover clubs, that only include clovers, are not required to meet charter requirements. County/City 4-H Extension Educators should send a letter to the Clover Club Organizational Leader authorizing them to use the 4-H emblem with a copy to the Maryland 4-H Center. Clubs that have clovers and older members must go through the charter process.

Documentation Requirements

All requests for 4-H club charters must be made by the 4-H Extension Educator and submitted to the State Program Leader, 4-H Youth Development. Dr. Jeff Howard currently holds that position at the State 4-H Office. Charter requests may be sent at any time and will be issued as received by the State 4-H Office. The submitted documentation and signed 4-H Charter will be returned to the County/City 4-H Office.

Effective March 1, 1998, the following documentation must accompany each 4-H charter requested:

Name of Club/Group	Annual Program Plan
MCE Volunteer Leader List	BY-LAWS
Membership List	AA Documentation (AA-4H/HE4 Form)
Club EIN Number (Federal Tax Id Number)	List of Officers
Certification Letter from Ext. 4-H Educator	

Misplaced 4-H Club Charters

Each County/City unit must submit to the State 4-H Office a list of the names of 4-H clubs, for which charters have been issued and a copy of the original charter is no longer available. This list should include, as close as possible, the date the club was chartered. This list must also include a statement from the 4-H Extension Educator, that all of the clubs listed meet the charter requirements.

4-H Club Charter Inventory

An inventory template for the Counties/Cities to complete is available on the Maryland 4-H Web site. Information needed includes: county/city, name of club, club number (county # and club #, e.g. 13-1001), date charter was issued, column to check indicating the club has BY-LAWS, and the EIN tax number.

4-H Club Charter Regulations

1. Dissolution of chartered 4-H clubs
The 4-H Extension Educator will send a letter to the State 4-H Office stating that all the property of (club name and number) has been turned over to the County/City Extension Office according to the Financial Guidelines for Chartered 4-H Clubs and that the charter is to be canceled effective the date of dissolution.
2. Clubs falling below charter requirements
Clubs falling below charter requirements will go on probation and have one year to return to full status. If they do not, the charter will be revoked.
3. Clubs that divide
Clubs that divide will need to meet 4-H club charter requirements to be chartered. If the new club name(s) is (are) different, the old charter is void and the group(s) will have to apply for a new charter.

County/City Record Keeping Requirements for Chartered 4-H Clubs

County/City units need to keep a separate file for each chartered club both active and inactive as well as all Clover clubs. Files should include:

Copy of Club Charter	Club Membership Lists
Copy of Federal EIN Number (52 #)	Club Recognitions
Annual Financial Statements	MCE Volunteer Lists
Letters of Dissolution (if applicable)	Other Appropriate Data
Copy of the BY-LAWS	

Equal opportunity employer and equal access programs.

Developed by Claudia Payne & Martin Hamilton -1998
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