



# An Introduction to 4-H

## What is 4-H?

4-H is a youth development program that provides a supportive setting for all youth to mature into competent, caring, and responsible adults through the learning of beneficial cognitive and life skills.

## Who may belong to 4-H?

All boys and girls who are at least 8 years of age by January 1 and who have not passed their 19th birthday by January 1 can join 4-H. A special 4-H Clover Program is offered for children ages 5 through 7.

## How do kids and teens get involved?

Many 4-H programs are community-based, with leadership provided by adult and teen volunteers. Each county and Baltimore City has programs that are designed to meet the needs of kids, teens, and the volunteers who work with them, so 4-H may look different in different places. Typically, young people participate in 4-H in one or more of these ways:

- Community or project 4-H clubs that meet one or more evenings or weekends a month, depending on the club and what club members want to do.
- 4-H clubs that meet once a week in an afterschool program.
- 4-H special interest groups that meet every week for one or more months.
- 4-H overnight or day camps that are offered during the summer.

## 4-H at a Glance



**The 4-H Emblem:** The H's on each leaf stand for the words Head, Heart, Hands, and Health.

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**4-H Colors:** Green and White

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**4-H Slogan:** "Learn by Doing"

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**4-H Motto:** "To Make the Best Better"

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**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."

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There are 4-H programs in Baltimore City and in every county in Maryland.

## Why do kids and teens like 4-H?

They have fun with friends at meetings, social activities, camps, and fairs and on tours and trips. They have opportunities to provide leadership to younger children and to learn more about themselves.

## What are 4-H Clubs?

A 4-H club is a group of five or more young people, guided by one or more adult 4-H leaders approved through the Maryland Cooperative Extension volunteer process. Each club has an educational plan that meets the purposes of the 4-H program. The club meets on a continuing basis, usually once a month, at a location convenient for the members of the club—typically in central places such as a school or community center. Some clubs may meet at a food bank, library, or other location in conjunction with a community service activity. Youth are involved in leadership and decision-making roles because clubs “belong” to their members. Many clubs have officers (president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, reporter, etc.) that are elected by the members.

## How big are 4-H clubs?

The size of 4-H clubs depends on the age of the members, the places they meet, and the number of leaders who work with them. The average 4-H club is likely to have 10 to 20 members.

## What do 4-H members do at meetings?

4-H club meetings usually have four parts: business, a 4-H project or special interest program, recreation, and social activities. Club meetings usually last 1½ hours, depending on the activity or project a club is involved in.

## What about 4-H projects?

There are more than 100 4-H projects to choose from in areas ranging from animal science, food and fitness, citizenship, leadership, environmental science, aerospace, computers, and more! For more information, check out the 4-H Project Fact Sheet.

## How much does 4-H cost?

4-H costs are minimal. There are no national or state 4-H dues. Individual clubs may charge dues to cover expenses, such as literature expenses related to specific projects. Many 4-H projects can be completed with little or no cost, although some project areas, such as photography and livestock, may require extra investments for supplies and equipment.



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