

Appendix A

Ohio 4-H Policies and Procedures

County 4-H Program Components

(Approved by Administrative Cabinet 1/85, 12/93, 10/95)

Rationale

Ohio State University Extension (O.S.U. Extension) places strong emphasis on its 4-H youth program. Professional 4-H personnel are expected to maintain a dynamic, effective, learn by doing, educational program, striving for excellence in youth and adult learning. These guidelines, along with the job description and the position description, can form a basis for planning and evaluating county 4-H programs.

4-H programs must be flexible to meet the needs, backgrounds and interests of people of the county, and at the same time, reflect the basic objectives and purposes of O.S.U. Extension.

County extension agents should work as a team toward a total program. Agents need to include activities for the personal and professional development such as in-service training, additional course work, NAE4-HA membership and other professional growth opportunities.

Components

4-H Membership – Eligibility for 4-H membership begins when a child has reached age 5 and is enrolled in kindergarten as of January 1 of the current year (Cloverbuds); membership to the 4-H club program begins when a child is at least age 8 and enrolled in 3rd grade as of January 1 of the current year. Ohio 4-H membership ends December 31 of the year in which an individual attains the age of 19. 4-H membership starts once an eligible individual enrolls in a 4-H group opportunity, providing a planned series of educational experiences, under the direction a trained adult, and within the scope and supervision of Ohio State University Extension. All educational programs conducted by Ohio State University Extension are available to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race color, creed, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, gender, age, disability, or Vietnam-era status. (See “Ohio 4-H Membership Guidelines” – Appendix B)

Volunteer Staff – A knowledgeable and well-trained staff of volunteers must be maintained to conduct the 4-H educational programs within local 4-H clubs and units, broad geographical or countywide special interest groups, and 4-H in-school programs. Attention should be given to specific categories of leadership: club advisor, school enrichment, special emphasis, etc.

Selection, recruitment, orientation, training and recognition of 4-H volunteers are essential elements for a successful, high-quality program. Planned educational

opportunities must be provided for leaders to gain subject matter and organizational training to foster their personal growth and strengthen their competencies to help 4-H members.

Please refer to the Ohio 4-H Volunteer Involvement Policy (Appendix M) implemented November 1, 2002, for specific policies regarding current and potential 4-H volunteers.

Committees – An overall county 4-H advisory committee/program must be established and maintained. It is the main body through which other committees are formed and given responsibilities. Membership should consist of 4-H volunteers, older members, parents, community and educational leaders, alumni, and/or business representatives who are interested the development of the county 4-H program. Membership of the committee should represent a balanced male/female, ethnic, geographic, and program interest cross-section of the county.

An effective and logical rotation of committee membership should be maintained. The committee should meet at regular, pre-determined dates.

The committee meeting should be led by the chair with a planned agenda agreed upon by the chair and agent and sent to the committee in advance.

Sub-committees should be used when necessary and include such emphasis as adult/member education, finances/fund raising, community service, awards and recognition, promotion/public relations, and specific project subject matter areas (i.e., horse, home economics, etc.). They should be representative of the people involved in that specific area. Proposals and actions of sub-committees must be communicated to the overall county 4-H Committee.

Ad Hoc Sub-committees may be formed as needed.

Older Youth – 4-H is a positive influence in enhancing the personal, social and role-in-life development of youth. Development of skills, knowledge, and attitudes in the areas of citizenship, leadership, careers and use of leisure are gained. Older youth do this through participation in the following essential program components:

- a. Adequate project progression opportunities,
- b. Teen Leadership program opportunities at the club, county, and national levels.
- c. Involvement in selected educational pursuits such as special interest educational programs, workshops, recognition programs, conferences and other programs at the club, county, district, state, national and international levels. Each county should provide a combination of older youth offerings that enable teens to further develop their life skills.

- d. State 4-H Ambassadors; Teen Council; State Camp Counselor; Advisory Committee Member; Tech Team; Working With Teens Committee; etc.

Curriculum – Four-H curriculum refers to all 4-H teaching and/or learning experiences designed and managed by O.S.U. Extension. A wide variety of these opportunities should be available to 4-H youth.

Project work is one of the basic, unique features of the 4-H curriculum.

Emphasis should be placed on project teaching including progressive learning experiences and providing youth with the proper project literature and other resources. Youth should also have the opportunity to have their work evaluated and displayed.

Other learning experiences such as camping, county fair, tours, public speaking, demonstrations, community service projects, international opportunities, contests, etc. should be made available to each 4-H member. These educational methods should be designed to achieve predetermined goals. Helping youth identify their own needs and goals and how they relate to available opportunities are important aspects of youth development.

Recognition and Awards – Recognition is an important part of the growth and development of youth or adults. The 4-H recognition program consists of four types of recognition: 1) participation in educational experiences; 2) individual progress toward goals; 3) achievement of Standards of Excellence, and; 4) results from peer competition. A single recognition and awards program cannot achieve the goal of recognizing excellence of members and volunteers in a multi-faceted 4-H program. Each of the four types of recognition provides motivation and recognizes excellence in a unique way. The recognition segments should be planned and incorporated into all 4-H activities.

Recognition is a tool that 4-H program personnel (agent, advisors, others) can use to help clientele have a satisfying experience in 4-H. A balance of recognition for different project areas should be maintained. Recognition can come in many forms such as awards, trips, pat on back, pins, the chance to preside or a simple thank you. Everyone who is involved in 4-H should be recognized. Proper recognition of the Extension audience of youth, volunteer leaders, sponsors and supporters can lead to strong Extension educational programs.

Public and Private Support – Four-H agents are responsible for defining the needs for 4-H program funds in county Extension budget determination. The county Extension 4-H program involves large dollar contributions from donors, fund raising, and other efforts. These private funds supplement the public dollars received from county, state and federal governments.

Agents working with Extension co-workers and the 4-H committee should determine needs for private support. Specific plans should be developed for effective 4-H budget

development and justification, solicitation and clientele education of needed public or private funds, and responsible accountability.

Evaluation and Accountability – Personnel involved in the 4-H program are accountable to the public for proper expenditure of public and private funds as well as for the quality of the 4-H program. Team building efforts should be encouraged by delegation of responsibilities for specific program areas and components among county unit staff, whether paid or volunteer. In turn, all parties must be informed of the shared efforts and assigned leadership roles.

In this way a total, comprehensive plan can be executed for the county 4-H program that meets the needs and interests of the county clientele while maintaining efficiency and cooperation among the staff, and striving to meet long range goals.

Determining 4-H program quality is challenging. Comparisons of recruitment, retention, accessibility to educational programs, participation, and levels of public support can be quantified with each individual county to detail the current situation and provide a benchmark by which to measure future progress. Not only must personnel plan, conduct, and teach programs that can be documented but time must also be incorporated to translate or communicate accomplishments achievements, and other results of the educational processes in a form easily understood by both the public and private sectors. Formal evaluation of some activities each year is desirable and should be a part of long range planning.

Promotion and Visibility – Four-H should use every opportunity to promote and publicize the program with the general public. Through high-visibility 4-H programs and activities that have high impact on the public, 4-H will increase public understanding and support.

Some methods being used in accomplishing these goals include the following:

- a. Establishing and maintaining excellent rapport with mass media personnel, which results in high 4-H visibility with the public;
- b. Using various approaches and 4-H awareness and visibility materials that keep 4-H before the public throughout the year;
- c. Establishing and following a master plan and a timetable of 4-H promotion and publicity activities, events, and public awareness approaches, which result in a positive and supportive image of 4-H;
- d. Implementing and maintaining an aggressive public relations program;
- e. Sending key elected and opinion leaders a copy of county newsletter.