

# 4-H Project Club Management Guide

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## Project 4-H Club

The community/neighborhood 4-H club is a club that consists of members who live near each other in a community or neighborhood and offers project groups for a variety of projects.

The project club has the same characteristics of a community 4-H club except that it *initially (upon organization) provides for only one project interest.*

The project club recognizes the limited amount of time people have and that most people tend to limit themselves to one major outside interest. The project club is a good way to attract membership through one project interest. A project club could co-exist in a rural community with a community 4-H club. In a large town or city, where there are numerous community 4-H clubs, there could be numerous project clubs made up of people having a primary interest in such areas as shooting sports, rabbits, dogs, horses, gardening, clothing, etc.

The 4-H project club is an ideal way to expand membership and to create interest in new project areas. This organizational concept is especially appealing to parents/adults and volunteers who have intense interest in the project area.

The characteristics of the 4-H project club are as follows:

- composed of at least five 4-H members
- has at least one club manager
- has as many project leaders as required
- has junior and teen leaders
- has 4-H officers that may include: president, vice presidents, secretary, treasurer and county 4-H council delegates
- has club meetings each month
- has project groups that meet during the duration of the projects
- has a club community service project
- involves all parents/supporting adults

The volunteer leadership required for the project 4-H club are the same as for a community 4-H club.

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|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Club manager            | 4. Project leaders                   |
| 2. Assistant or co-manager | 5. Activity or special event leaders |
| 3. Club officers           | 6. Teen and junior leaders           |

When a 4-H project club is initially organized, it is developed around one project interest (Attachment #6). However, over time, these 4-H members will notice 4-H members from other clubs conducting other projects and participating in activities different from those related to their project. Soon, 4-H members, parents and

leaders will begin to inquire about other opportunities in 4-H. A need for expansion of the club arises.

As a result, new project groups may begin noticing the change, you will see that the project club begins to take on the look of a community 4-H club (Attachment #7). However, it is important to remember that the membership may continue to emphasize the project which they initially chose. This pattern is the logical expansion process for a project 4-H club.

Since one project is the primary focus of a project club, the club managers and project leaders have to work hard to keep interest up. It is vital for the volunteers to come up with new ideas and teaching methods to allow members to grow in the project. Where do these ideas come from?

- ◆ Maintain an open mind. Don't be held back by "We've always done it this way" or "We've never done that." Brainstorm! When you brainstorm there are no wrong answers and everyone can contribute, no matter how silly an idea may seem!
- ◆ Visit with other clubs or even leaders from other counties working with the same project. By attending county and district-wide meetings, leaders can share ideas and resources.
- ◆ Ask the members what they want to learn more about! If the members have a chance for input, they are going to take more ownership with the group and its activities.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of Project Club Leader**

1. Organize a group of five or more members and help them develop project club educational experiences.
2. Teach knowledge, skills and attitudes.
3. Develop leadership in members by electing officers, developing committees and recruiting teen or junior leaders.
4. Teach members the purpose and requirements of the project.
5. Teach members to judge, demonstrate, exhibit and keep records.
6. Assist with publicity of the project club.
7. Plan for recognition of the members in the project club (present certificates or pins, have member-of-the-week, have a club project show).
8. Assist members in evaluating projects. Goal setting and record keeping are two of the important things that 4-H members learn in the 4-H projects. Records are more easily encouraged if the group works on them as they go. The 4-H project record 4-H 3.030 for animals and poultry and the 4-H project record 4-H 3.033 for all projects except animals and poultry are the key record keeping devices to use during the project.

## **Leading a Project Group**

The job of a 4-H project leader is a challenging and rewarding one. Through it you can be a positive force

in the lives of 4-H members and help them develop into mature people who are able to function effectively in a rapidly changing world.

The aim of 4-H is the development of each youth's potential. 4-H provides opportunities for this development through projects which serve as the foundation of this informal educational program.

### **The Project Leader's Role**

The major role is that of a teacher, but not as in the traditional classroom. Teach's helping members learn by doing. For example, under your guidance, members in the Sports Fishing project will learn how to tie a hook on the line, to bait a hook, to cast and to clean a fish. The classroom is wherever the member must be in order to learn. It may be the home, a meeting room, in the yard, at the lake, in the neighborhood or on a field trip. Project work should allow members to be involved actively in the learning process.

It is helpful to have some knowledge of the project that is lead, but THIS IS NOT AN ABSOLUTE REQUIREMENT. Many leaders are effective teachers and have learned along with the members.

### **The Project Leader's Responsibilities**

The project leader helps to make project work meaningful for 4-H members. The primary responsibilities are:

- **To enroll members in projects**  
Each member must be enrolled in a project and needs to fill out an **enrollment card**. This is available from your County Extension Agent or club manager.
- **To secure project literature**  
Leader's guides are available for most 4-H projects. Project record forms are available for all projects. You are responsible for getting the project materials from the County Extension Agent and distributing them at your first meeting.
- **To organize and hold project meetings**  
Starting and ending dates for a project, as well as dates of all project meetings and activities, are arranged at the convenience of the project leader and the members. Frequent and regular meetings sustain the interest of members better than infrequent and irregular meetings. If possible, schedule project meetings weekly or bi-weekly until the work has been completed.

Most of the teaching takes place during the project meeting. You should be familiar with the content of the project and make definite plans for each meeting (An outline for planning the project meeting is included.) Pre-planning is necessary for a smooth running and productive meeting.

- **To teach the members**  
The primary responsibility is to teach the members. Members and parents must know what is expected and what materials are needed to insure a successfully completed project.

Successful 4-H project work depends on involving youth in the “doing” aspect of learning. You will want to use a variety of appropriate teaching methods that involve the members in discussions, demonstrations, exhibits, and educational outings.

- **To assist members in planning, conducting and completing a project**

Each member should use a Project Record to plan a project, to keep records of what is done and to summarize what was learned and accomplished. Members plan their project goals and activities at the first or second meeting, participate in activities at home or at project meetings, record these activities as they are completed and complete their project record at the last meeting.

- **To help members participate in 4-H events**

A 4-H member who participates actively in project meetings and other club events usually maintains greater interest than one who does not. It is important to involve members in planning and carrying out meetings and special events. Plan to help members participate in county 4-H events. The County Extension Agent will supply a list of events that may interest the members.

Volunteers can work with young people through a project club. The County Extension Agent can advise and counsel you about the local 4-H structure.

## **Project Club**

Start with a few youngsters from your local neighborhood and form a project club. The project club would have officers and the members would participate in a business session as well as a teaching session.

Members can gain leadership skills by serving as officers, committee chairmen or on committees. The County Extension Agent can provide you with information on the role and duties of 4-H club officers.

## **ORGANIZE FOR EFFECTIVE PROJECT MEETINGS**

### **Organize**

The first meeting should be an organizational one. It’s a good idea to have parents as well as members attend the first session. At this time:

1. Make a complete list of the project members, their ages, addresses, telephone numbers and the names of their parents/supporting adults.
2. Distribute literature and give an interesting preview of what members can do in the project.
3. Talk about project goals, beginning and ending dates of the project, what is expected of members in attendance and records and what is expected of parents/supporting adults.
4. Discuss equipment and materials needed for the project.
5. Distribute project records and assist members in completing the first page, including setting their personal project goals. Explain how records should be kept and when the project record form

should be completed.

6. Have members elect their officers.
7. Set the time and place for the next meeting and make assignments.

## **Plan Project Meetings**

Most projects have a guide. Study the guide and adapt it to the situation. For each meeting, plan what is to be accomplished, the information provided, the materials needed and how to involve the members in a learning activity. Plan meetings so that members will have enough time and enough help to finish their work. Give each member a definite responsibility as often as possible and try to fit the responsibility to the member's abilities and interests.

A model for conducting project meetings has been worked out through the years. Although the meeting may not follow this exact format, it can be used as a general outline.

### *Part One — Arrival*

It is important that, as members arrive, there is something for them to do. The arrival activity could be planned and led by a member of the group who arrives 10 or 15 minutes early, or by a teen or junior leader. Examples of arrival activities are get-acquainted games, mixer games and learning activities. The activity could also relate to the subject that will be discussed during the meeting. At a photography meeting, for instance, camera equipment might be placed on a table, with members given a sheet of paper and asked to identify the different pieces of equipment or different parts of the camera.

### *Part Two — Business Session*

The president conducts a regular business meeting.

- Discuss members' participation at club meetings, in county activities and at other events.
- Make plans for tours, exhibits, and other events that add to the progress and interest of project work.
- Announce time and place of next meeting.

### *Part Three — Instruction*

This part of the project meeting is the teaching part. The project leader will want to review subjects talked about at the last meeting as well as present new information. Examples of instruction methods are lectures, method demonstrations, progress reports by members, discussions, slide tape sets, video tapes, etc. The instruction is usually presented by the project leader. However, instruction may be presented by a resource person or by a teen or junior leader who has had experience and has prepared this part of the meeting.

### *Part Four — Work or Activity*

This is the section of the project meeting in which youth actually learn by doing. Based on instructions

given, members may prepare a dish, construct a simple garment, work on a craft or judge an animal or article. It is very important that each project meeting have a work or activity period during which 4-H members actually develop their skills and experience performing an activity by themselves. Sometimes the instruction and the work period will be conducted at the same time because it may be more beneficial for each step to be undertaken and completed as instructions for that step are given.

Help members have fun and enjoy their work. You can do this by being enthusiastic about the project, keeping the members actively involved in the project meeting and making the project exciting by adding variety and surprises. Above all, enjoy it yourself – and let them know it!

#### *Part Five — Recognition*

Youth need recognition. It is important to provide recognition at all project meetings. Recognition may simply be in the form of saying, “John, you are doing a good job,” or “Jane, I appreciate your helping Tom with his project today.” It may be in the form of recognizing the group that did the best job of cleaning up. It may be in the form of talking personally with a project member about his own project and making him feel recognized and important because you care about him. It can also take a more formal form, with recognition for the person who won the game, had the most correct answers, or completed the most project work at the project meetings. Pins or completion certificates can be given at the end of the project. Recognition can also be in the form of asking a member to assume responsibility for an assignment for the next meeting or for another activity.

#### *Part Six — Fun Activity*

All project meetings should have time for recreation. This can be the first, or arrival activity, it can be made a part of the instruction by including a game, or it can be at the end of the meeting. This is one part of the meeting that can be conducted very easily by one of the project members or by a teen or junior leader.

#### *Part Seven — Assignments*

At the end of each project meeting, members should be told what they will be expected to do at home before the next meeting and what the subject of the next meeting will be. Specific assignments can be made for group members to lead parts of the next meeting or to provide refreshments or project equipment.