



Letters to New Leaders: Letter 3

Planning and Conducting 4-H Club Meetings

Dear Volunteer Leader:

This letter includes information about the basic ingredients needed to conduct a successful 4-H club meeting.

Engaging Youth as Club Officers and Committee Members

Club officers are an important part of the 4-H club leadership team. Being an officer gives 4-H members an opportunity to develop and practice leadership skills and responsibility.

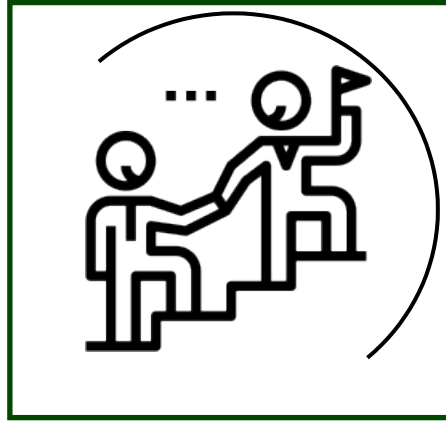
Elected club officers typically are:

| | |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| President | Vice President |
| Secretary | Treasurer |
| Reporter | Recreation Leader |

Other elected officers include photographer; historian; scrapbook, cleanup, and field trip coordinators. You can download instruction sheets and materials for these officers on the Missouri 4-H website, <https://extensiondata.missouri.edu/Pro/4h/Docs/GetInvolved/ClubManagement/ClubLeader/officer-series.pdf>

Each club member should have an opportunity to be an officer or committee chair. Large clubs may have junior and senior officers or set terms for only half the 4-H year.

Committees help clubs run smoothly by planning and supervising various club activities. Committee members may be youth members or adults.



More Resources:

- *So You Are an Officer Series* ([Y783](#))

The 4-H Meeting

Club meetings include three parts:

- **Fun**—Plan 15 to 20 minutes for recreation, refreshment, and fellowship.
- **Business**—Allow 15 to 20 minutes for the business meeting, discussion, and planning.
- **Learning**—Include 40 to 60 minutes for community service activities, tours, guest speakers, and presentations.

Creating a Sense of Belong in 4-H Groups

Teaching youth and adults the 4-H Pledge and Motto is important. Having a shared tradition gives youth a sense of belonging.

The pledge and related motions are:

I pledge:

My Head to clearer thinking
(point to head with right hand)

My Heart to greater loyalty
(place right hand over heart)

My Hands to larger service
(arms bent, palms up)

My Health to better living
(arms at sides)

**For my club, my community,
my country, and my world.**

The 4-H Motto is: **To Make the Best Better.**

Often, members start each meeting with the 4-H Pledge and the Pledge of Allegiance and close the meeting with the motto, said in unison. Contact your local 4-H staff to find out how to order flag sets, motto and gavel.

Youth Officers' Roles

Let club or program youth officers plan and conduct the meetings and do their assigned jobs. Adults can be supportive, but kids do the work. Ask the Collegiate 4-H club or another guest speaker to do a parliamentary procedure or other group decision-making processes training.

Possible Agenda Items

The business meeting portion of the 4-H club meeting is based on a recommended structure that is planned and run by youth officers. Adult volunteers and parents are in a guiding, supportive role. This is a typical agenda for most meetings.

A recommended business order:

1. Call to order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. 4-H Pledge
4. Roll Call
5. Minutes of previous meeting
6. Approval of minutes
7. Treasurer's Report
8. Officer and committee reports
9. Unfinished business
10. New business
11. Meeting adjourned

There are many agenda variations from which you can choose. Some clubs also include informal business

Planning a Program Plan and Club Calendar

To help meet the established club goals, club leaders should work closely with the youth officers to plan 4-H events throughout the year.

The youth-led planning helps ensure youth are committed and interested in the club activities and goals. The calendar helps the club members keep up with the array of opportunities and lessen confusion.

All members should have a say in choosing specific activities. Suggestions for activities include educational presentations, project work, preparation for contests and fairs, and a variety of social activities with families and other 4-H clubs.

Activities can include field trips and tours that members are interested in.

Setting Club Goals

It is helpful for your club officers to set a few primary goals each year. These goals are statements of what the members want to accomplish as a club and should meet the needs and interests of individual members. Leaders and members also should make individual project goals.

Examples of club goals are:

- Increase quality of 4-H club experience. Talk to local 4-H staff about Quality Matters in the 4-H process.
 - [Welcoming, Engaging and Encouraging](#)
 - [Structure and Planning](#)
 - [Youth Voice & Engagement](#)
 - [Reframing Conflict](#)
 - [Reflection](#)
- Provide a service to the community
- Recruit and retain new members

Adapted from *Letters to New 4-H Leaders*, M.A. Dodd, L. Hoglum, and M. Robinson (1998) Oregon State University Cooperative Extension, Corvallis, OR. Updated August 2017 by Elaine Anderson, Elaine George, Don Nicholson, Brittany Nieder, Tammy Gillespie, and Paula Skillicorn. Updated August 2022 by Stephanie Femrite and Sherry Grace.

Quality Matters in 4-H: A Checklist for Staff and Volunteers

- ✓ I know how to provide a safe physical and emotional youth program environment
- ✓ I know how to provide a warm welcome to all youth, free of bias or exclusionary behavior
- ✓ I know the physical safety safeguards I should put in place at all 4-H events
- ✓ I know best practice strategies for helping youth reframe conflict if needed
- ✓ I know how to support youth engagement with materials and abstract ideas
- ✓ I allow youth officers the opportunity to maintain control of at least 50 percent of club meetings
- ✓ I know how to support youth interaction through multiple planning techniques
- ✓ I know how to provide all youth with specific encouragement rather than blanket praise
- ✓ I know how to support youth decision-making in content and process choices
- ✓ I know how to create opportunities for all youth to serve in a leadership role in some capacity
- ✓ I know how to create opportunities for all youth to express ideas with others
- ✓ I know how to provide all youth with opportunities to reflect and evaluate activity and club experiences

Thank you for your commitment to improving the 4-H program quality through volunteer development!