

# 4-H Member's Handbook



*Welcome to 4-H!*

*As a 4-H member, you are a part of one of the largest youth programs in the world. Through 4-H, you will meet new friends, learn new skills, travel, and have fun!*



## Pledge

I pledge:

My Head to clearer thinking

My Heart to greater loyalty

My Hands to larger service

My Health to better living for my club, my community, my country, and my world.

## Motto

To make the best better

## Slogan

Learn by doing

## Colors

Green and white

Green—Nature's most common color is symbolic of springtime, life, and youth.

White—Symbolizes purity and high ideals.

## Creed

I believe in 4-H club work for the opportunity it gives me to become a useful citizen.

I believe in the training of my Head for the power it will give me to think, plan, and reason.

I believe in the training of my Heart for the nobleness it will give me to be kind, sympathetic, and true.

I believe in the training of my Hands for the ability it will give me to be helpful, skillful, and useful.

I believe in the training of my Health for the strength it will give me to enjoy life, resist disease, and work efficiently.

I believe in my country, my state, my community, and in my responsibility for their development. In all these things I believe, and I am willing to dedicate my efforts to their fulfillment.



## What is 4-H?

4-H is an informal, practical, learn-by-doing educational program for youths ages 5 to 19, from rural and urban areas, and from all racial, cultural, economic, and social backgrounds. 4-H helps you set goals, and it can help you learn how to be a good citizen. And you have fun in the process! In 4-H, you learn to solve problems facing you and your community. The knowledge and skills you acquire in 4-H can open the door to a lifetime of personal growth. 4-H is the youth program of the Mississippi State University Extension Service.

## What is the 4-H emblem?



The 4-H emblem is a four-leaf clover with an “H” on each leaf. The letters in the emblem stand for Head, Heart, Hands, and Health—the foundation of all 4-H programs:

- Use your head to think, make decisions, understand “why,” and gain new and valuable knowledge in many areas.
- The heart involves concern with the welfare of others, accepting responsibilities of citizenship, determining values and attitudes, and learning how to work and live with others at home; in your community, state, and nation; and around the world.
- Use your hands to learn new skills, to perfect skills you already know, and to explore possible vocations and careers.
- Health involves practicing healthful living, protecting the well-being of yourself and others, and making constructive use of leisure time.

Although every 4-H club or program is different, the four essential elements are common to all. As a member of your local 4-H club, you will experience a sense of belonging. You will be cared for and accepted not only by other 4-H members, but also by 4-H adult volunteers and your local county Extension staff. You will be mastering new knowledge and developing new skills when you work on 4-H projects designed to help you improve yourself rather than compare yourself to others.

Your 4-H membership will also give you the opportunity to connect with your community and give back to others. As you practice generosity, you will develop a greater sense of compassion and tolerance for diversity. While working on your 4-H projects and with

your 4-H club, you will practice personal responsibility and discipline, allowing you to influence people and events through decision-making and action, providing you a sense of independence.

## How do you become a part of 4-H?

- Join a 4-H club. Members select one or more projects, elect officers, and plan and implement a program for all or several months of the year. All the members may enroll in the same project (a project club) or in a variety of projects (general club). You can find 4-H clubs in communities and schools.
- Take part in a special-interest group. In a special-interest group, members learn about one subject during one or several meetings.
- Take part in a school enrichment project. Members participate in a 4-H program that enriches or enhances a subject they are studying in school, taught by the teacher during school time.
- Enroll as an individual member. Boys and girls may carry out individual 4-H projects even if they are not members of a local 4-H group.

## Who are 4-H volunteers?

Adults and young people serve as volunteers in the 4-H program. Some volunteers help plan and conduct 4-H projects and activities. Others serve as leaders to 4-H clubs.

## What are 4-H projects?

Each 4-H member may enroll in one or more 4-H projects. 4-H projects are “learn by doing” experiences. You should select a project you are interested in and would like to learn about. You work on the project(s) throughout the year, keep records of what you do and learn, and then turn your record in to your project leader or 4-H club leader. You may enroll in the same project or a different project each year.



Before you select your 4-H project(s), talk with your parents or guardian and club leader. Your 4-H project book(s) will present information about how and what you should do to complete the project. You have completed your project for the year when you have carried out your project goals.

## May I wear 4-H pins, clothes, and other novelties?

As a 4-H member, you are entitled to wear the official 4-H member pin and other 4-H clothing items available from the National 4-H Council. For more information, contact your volunteer leader or Extension agent.

## What leadership opportunities does 4-H offer?

The County 4-H Club Council is an organization made up of representatives of each 4-H club in the county. The purpose of the 4-H Club Council is to promote 4-H projects and activities and to provide 4-H'ers an opportunity to serve at the county level. Members of the County 4-H Club Council learn to improve their leadership skills.

In the 4-H Leadership Project, members learn ways to carry out the different leadership roles, such as club officer, committee member, junior leader, or teen leader. The 4-H Leadership Project is open to 4-H members of any age:

- A Junior Leader is a 4-H member who serves as an assistant or helper to an adult or teen leader.
- A Teen Leader is a 4-H member who has a 4-H leadership role normally given to an adult, such as a project or activity leader or a 4-H club leader.
- Other leadership opportunities might be serving as an officer of a club and/or council and as a committee member and committee chairperson.

## Are there special opportunities for older youths in 4-H?

State 4-H Council officers represent 4-H at state and district events, which they help plan and conduct. State Council officers are elected by 4-H members who attend a state 4-H event. In order to run for a State Council office, a 4-H member must submit a résumé that summarizes his/her 4-H experiences. Youths in the 15 to 18 age group are eligible for nomination.

County and State 4-H Ambassador team members promote and assist 4-H programming at the local and state levels. This is an opportunity to obtain additional leadership skills that will enhance any future leadership opportunity. Contact your local county Extension agent for additional information about the application process.



## Are there opportunities for 4-H experiences outside the state?

National 4-H Conference is held at the National 4-H Center in Washington, DC, each spring. A predetermined number of 4-H members (based on funds available) are selected as delegates, who participate in program development workshops and in developing methods of promoting 4-H progress. They visit their senators and congress members to provide them a report of 4-H work in Mississippi. The state delegation implements a plan of action adopted by the entire Conference delegation to be implemented back in the state.

Citizenship-Washington-Focus is held at the National 4-H Center in Washington, DC, each summer. The program focuses on what being a good citizen means, on how 4-H members practice citizenship, and on how our government works. The delegation tours historic sites while in Washington. Additional information is available through National 4-H Council.

## What 4-H events are held in Mississippi?

Your county Extension agent or 4-H club leader will give you a 4-H Calendar of Events that lists 4-H project workshops, activities, and contests that will be conducted at the county, district, and state levels.

## Why are family members important to your success in 4-H?

Since most 4-H projects are carried out at home, 4-H should be a family affair. Family members can help you plan and carry out project work. Your family can provide encouragement as well as transportation to meetings and events. Parents need to stay informed about the programs and activities of your 4-H club. Parents may share their talents and interests by serving as 4-H project and activity leaders.

## Responsibilities of a 4-H member

As a 4-H member, you should do the following:

- Complete your 4-H project.
- Give visual presentations or demonstrations on your 4-H project.
- Make exhibits of your project work.
- Attend club meetings.
- Take part in club activities.
- Participate in county 4-H workshops and clinics.
- Assist younger members.
- Encourage others to join 4-H.
- Know the 4-H Pledge and 4-H Motto.
- Let parents and friends know about 4-H.
- Keep a record of your 4-H work as you complete your project goals.

## Rights of a 4-H member

As a 4-H member, you have the right to do the following:

- Enroll in the 4-H project(s) of your choice.
- Participate in county 4-H activities and events.
- Enter any 4-H contest for which you are eligible.



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