Welcome to 4-H

An Orientation Guide for New Leaders

Cooperative Extension Service

College of Tropical Agriculture & Human Resources
University of Hawaii at Manoa

An Equal Opportunity / Affirmative Action Institution
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Introduction

This publication is designed to introduce new or prospective volunteer leaders to 4-H. It includes information about what it takes to be a leader, the role of a 4-H club, general definitions and how the 4-H program operates.

What is 4-H?

4-H is the youth educational program of the Cooperative Extension Service, conducted jointly by the University of Hawaii, a State land-grant university, and the United States Department of Agriculture. Private non-profit organizations also support and aid 4-H. They include the National 4-H Council, the Hawaii 4-H Alumni Association, and the Hawaii 4-H Foundation.

Hawaii 4-H Organizational Chart

Overview

4-H has been a successful youth education program for more than 85 years. The basic idea of a partnership between land-grant universities, Extension agents, volunteers and youth developed gradually during the years. The program currently reaches more than 6.5 million youth nationwide.

The national 4-H mission statement reinforces the partnership concept. The statement indicates that 4-H programs should help youth and volunteers in their educational development by using the knowledge and educational base of land-grant universities and the United States Department of Agriculture.

4-H assists youth in acquiring knowledge, developing life-skills, and forming attitudes which will enable them to become self-directing, productive, and contributing members of society.

Such a mission is carried out through the involvement of parents, volunteers, and other adults who organize and conduct educational subject/project experiences in community and family settings.
**4-H Objectives And Goals**

The objectives and goals of 4-H are to:

- Develop inquiring minds, and eagerness to learn and the ability to apply science and technology.
- Learn practical skills, develop competencies and acquire knowledge.
- Strengthen abilities to make intelligent decisions, solve problems and manage their own affairs in a fast changing world.
- Acquire positive attitudes toward self and a feeling of self-worth.
- Develop their potential by seeking and acquiring educational and vocational experiences.
- Improve skills in communication and self-expression.
- Develop effective interpersonal relationships with adults and other youths.
- Maintain optimum physical and mental health.
- Develop concern for involvement in community and public affairs.
- Increase leadership capabilities.
- Develop socially acceptable behavior, personal standards, and values for living.
- Use time wisely in attaining a balance in life (work, leisure, family, community, and self).

**4-H Traditions**

4-H has a set of traditions which started many years ago. Each symbol and statement carries a message which relates to the goals of 4-H.

**Emblem:**

The national 4-H emblem is a four-leafed clover with the letter "H" on each leaf. The 4-H's represent the equal training of the Head, Heart, Hands, and Health of every member. The use of the emblem is protected by a USDA copyright.

**Colors:**

The 4-H colors are Green and White. The Green of the 4-H clover is nature's most common color. It is symbolic of springtime, life, and youth. The White letters and background symbolize purity.

**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 county, and my world.

**Motto:**

"To Make The Best Better"

**Slogan:**

"Learn by Doing"
What is a 4-H Club?

A 4-H Club is an organization of boys and girls. In Hawaii, any boy or girl between the ages of 5 and 19 may join 4-H.

The members of your 4-H Club are children of your neighbors, relatives, and friends. They choose their own officers and one or more adults who serve as organization leaders. Some have assistant, junior, or activity leaders.

The 4-H Club is a home and family centered program. Club activities are related to real life experiences of daily living. In some 4-H clubs all the members enroll in the same project. In others, many projects are explored.

In addition to learning about the individual project, 4-H members learn to work and play together. By sharing their talents, they develop a sense of responsibility and leadership. They have fun too!

What Does It Take To Be A Leader

What does it take to be a leader? The simplest answer to this question is "willingness to make a commitment." A willingness to spend evenings and weekends helping youth learn about subjects that are important to them is the most important quality a 4-H leader must possess. A 4-H leader is a very special person that gives of himself/herself freely and expects nothing in return beyond the satisfaction of seeing club members grow in knowledge, abilities, citizenship and leadership.

National statistics show that the average 4-H volunteer donates 220 hours per year preparing for and teaching youth. An estimated value of the total time volunteers devote to 4-H, plus their out-of-pocket expenses, is about $1.1 billion annually. The time commitment involved is up to the individual. Some people volunteer for a specific task only. Others are involved in all phases of the program. There is a need for both kinds of 4-H leaders in the Oahu 4-H program.

Donations made by leaders will vary widely. For example, some leaders choose to travel to invitationals in other counties. Other leaders may choose to participate in camps or training meetings. Leaders may also decide to travel to statewide contests or events that are held outside of the community. Some may choose to provide transportation for their members as they go on field trips or attend other educational opportunities.

All contributions of time and money are voluntary. A 4-H leader must decide what he/she will take part in and how much time, money and resources they can commit to 4-H. New leaders should make clear the level of commitment he/she is willing to make, and in turn get the same commitment from the families in the 4-H group.
Getting Started

There are many kinds of leaders that provide support to 4-H. Project leaders need to have teaching skills. The following section is provided to help understand some of those teaching skills. Volunteer leaders teach by instruction and example - not just skills, such as knitting or horsemanship - but greater values such as responsibility, task completion and relationships. 4-H is an excellent way to acquiring life skills such as record keeping, report writing, public speaking and parliamentary procedure.

As stated in the introduction, 4-H is a people-oriented program that deals with youth. And there are no restrictions on place of residence, income, creed, or color.

This is a brief description of the steps which are necessary to start a 4-H club. The steps are:

Step 1: Have at least 1 adult leader.
Step 2: Recruit and enroll 5 or more 4-H youth members.
Step 3: Invite the 4-H agents to talk about 4-H (optional).
Step 4: Invite the parents to get their support.
Step 5: Select a club name.
Step 6: Elect a set of officers.
Step 7: Hold meetings.
Step 8: Charter Club.
Step 9: Pay for 4-H insurance (optional).

To be counted as a 4-H member and to receive a certificate of achievement, the child should:

1. Be between the ages of 5-19.
2. Complete an enrollment form when enrolled for the first time (Form 5A) and a parental permission form. Complete at least one project. Be a member of a club with an adult leader.

To be counted as a 4-H volunteer:

1. Complete a volunteer enrollment form (5A)

Each club must also turn in yearly group enrollment forms (5A).

Planning a 4-H Year

4-H leaders should develop a plan for the 4-H year. They should:

1. Plan what objectives the project will cover. Most 4-H projects have guides available from the extension office.
2. Decide on which specific skills to teach members. Set up a tentative time line for accomplishing these goals. Plan activities for each month. Set dates for project meetings, county events, fair activities and fund-raising projects.

Planning A Project Meeting

To plan a project meeting, leaders should:

1. Decide on a specific objective for the meeting. For example, a livestock group may learn how to trim sheep hooves or a foods group may learn how to make bran muffins.
2. Choose the time and location of the meeting -- their home, a member's home, public facilities or parks -- and then notify members. Dates may be adjusted so a majority of members can attend. Personal schedules should be a primary consideration. Decide on teaching aids (slides, videos, etc., that will enhance the lesson. Gather materials and be prepared. Members can help furnish material is asked in advance.

Opening The Meeting

At the beginning of each meeting, leaders help members:

1. Use parliamentary procedure as much as possible according to the age group. Have a business format with elected or appointed officers.
2. Call the meeting to order. Recite the 4-H pledge. Take roll call. Roll call may be livened up by asking members to respond to questions such as: What is your favorite 4-H activity? How many times did you work on 4-H in the previous week? What is a good game for the recreation period? Read the minutes of the last meeting and discuss old and new business.
Teaching The Project Lesson

While teaching the project lesson, the leader should:
1. Review previous lessons if applicable.
2. Ask questions to determine how much the members already know about a lesson and give background information as needed for understanding. For example, "To prepare a lamb's feed ration you need to know these facts about nutrition." State lesson objectives so members will understand what will be learned at the meeting and why. For example, "You will learn how to check your horse's feet for soundness because..." Teach or demonstrate the lesson in steps. For example - (1) Select a pattern. (2) Place it on the material. (3) Put the pins in like this. Use teaching aides for interest and clarification, "This video will show all the steps to follow in cleaning a gun." Allow time and opportunity for participation and practice. Evaluate and question members to be sure they understand or have mastered the skill. Summarize and restate the objectives at the close of the lesson, and then indicate plans for next meeting's project activity.

Close Of The Meeting

As the close of the meeting nears, leaders should:
1. Help members record information about the meeting for their records: date, material covered, demonstrations, etc.
2. Involve members in providing and serving refreshments (optional). Discuss the time, place and materials needed for the next meeting.

Everyone has the potential to become a good volunteer. Leadership can be learned. One important aspect of being a 4-H leader is having a good relationship with people.

Since leadership can be learned, it can be evaluated and improved. The best method of assessing leadership ability is self evaluation. The final measure of leadership ability is the growth of project members.

Where To Get More Help

Your Local Extension Office

Leaders can obtain information and get help from many sources, one of which is from the Oahu Cooperative Extension Agents. As a new volunteer/club, the PR/Expansion Agent will assist in orienting and helping in organizing new clubs. After a year or so the maintenance of 4-H clubs become the responsibility of the Oahu 4-H Organization Advisor Agent.

4-H volunteers can also get specific subject matter assistance from CES-Oahu staff who are trained in the major areas of agriculture, home economics, and youth development.

The CES-Oahu Educational Resource Center, located at the Urban Garden Center, 955 Kamehameha Hwy is the home of over 650 resources.
Other Sources

Volunteers can look at a variety of ways to meet the needs of their 4-H club. Other agencies and private industry are important parts in maximizing the potential of 4-H. Other agencies include local school systems, libraries, and other community facilities. They can offer assistance such as visual aides, various approaches to education or even ideas for unique ways to present a 4-H subject.

Depending on the project, local professionals may be available to speak to 4-H'ers. For example, a local veterinarian might speak on horse health; a community health nurse may present information on what to do if a child is hurt or ill; or a former 4-H member might address the group on the benefits of being a 4-H member and motivate the group toward excellence.

Speakers, visual aides, pamphlets or advice from professional can greatly enhance the 4-H program. 4-H leaders are encouraged to look at what is available locally and to work with the local Extension agent in providing 4-H members with a variety of experiences that result in a full curriculum. The local Extension office has the final authority on policy decisions regarding the 4-H program. Extension agents also provide leadership for the organization with the help of many dedicated volunteers and other people.

The new leader must take a proactive approach in learning about 4-H. There are many people willing to help but the new leader must actively pursue answers to questions. Many times, people who have been involved with 4-H for a long time have forgotten how a new leader feels. New leaders are an important part of maintaining a strong, vital, growing program and should ask questions and get involved.

Getting Involved

Now that you know a little about 4-H, the next step is up to you. If you are interested in becoming part of the 4-H organization, you should contact your local extension office and make an appointment to visit with the 4-H agent or general leader. Make them aware of the commitment you can make and find out how your talents can be utilized best.

Taking the first step and getting involved is one of the hardest parts of becoming a 4-H leader. As a new volunteer's involvement increases, he/she will experience the reason many other volunteers have made a commitment to 4-H -- helping youth learn skills that last a lifetime.