

Adapted by Steve Mullen from original material prepared by Mary Alice Dodd, 4-H volunteer; Lyla Houglam (former Extension 4-H specialist); and Michelle Robinson, former 4-H agent. Oregon State University Cooperative Extension publication.

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Letters to New Leaders

Letter 2



Getting Started With a 4-H Club

In this letter you'll find:

- How to recruit 4-H members — and how many should we have?
- How can I enroll my group as an official 4-H club?
- What about project materials?
- Are there dues for 4-H members?
- What about insurance?
- Where will our club meet?
- How often will our club meet?

Dear Leader,

This letter has answers to some of the most frequently asked questions about actually starting a 4-H club.

How to recruit 4-H members — and how many should we have?

First of all—how many members should a club have? 4-H clubs can have as few as five or six members or as many as 80 to 100 in some school clubs. Some suggest that 8 to 10 members per leader is a good number. However, it depends on the project area(s) of your club. It also depends on how many co-leaders or assistant leaders will be working with you. It is difficult to know how many youth will show up for the first meeting. If more kids show up than expected, ask parents or grandparents to assist.

As for recruiting members, it is seldom hard to do. Contact your 4-H agent. Your agent will have ideas for recruiting new club members and suggestions for promoting your club.

Because 4-H receives federal and state funds, we must be certain our programs are made available to all people equally without regard to race, color, national origin, sex or disability. Youth may not be turned away if they cannot pay club dues voted on by the members.

As for recruiting activity and project leaders, you may find it helpful to recruit interested parents, 4-H alumni, PTA members or friends who are willing to help. This gives the leader much-needed assistance and also provides continuity for club meetings in case of the leader's absence.

4-H manuals are excellent vehicles for teaching LEAP test content. If other teachers know this, they may be willing to serve as project leaders in their 4-H school club.

How can I enroll my group as an official 4-H club?

Your parish LSU AgCenter Extension office has the necessary enrollment forms for you to complete and submit to the office. Official enrollment is necessary for participation in any 4-H activity.

The 4-H year starts each August and runs through July. All 4-H members must re-enroll every year. Each parish has a due date for enrollment. All members must be enrolled by December 1 to remain on the mailing list and receive notices of events and activities. In addition, most parishes also have a deadline for project enrollment additions and changes in order to be eligible to participate in state and parish fairs and other activities. After your club enrollment has been submitted to your 4-H agent, you may receive a membership card for each member.

What about project materials?

Each 4-H office has the 4-H project materials and leader guides for the nine project areas: animals, nature, health, food and fitness, plants, citizenship, energy and





machines, family/child care and consumer education. The enrollment card lists all publications available for members. It is used as an order form, as well as your enrollment forms.

You'll find the project leaders' guides to be particularly helpful, since they contain not only information about the project, but also many helpful ideas on teaching methods and learning activities. Member and Leader materials are provided free.

Are there dues for 4-H members?

As a requirement of the use of the 4-H name and emblem, 4-H members are involved in deciding and voting on club dues. If your club members choose to hold a fund-raising project, be sure to check with your parish staff about fund-raising guidelines and policies in your parish. Also, the 4-H agents will have some ideas as to the kinds of activities that have been successful fund raisers in your area.

What about insurance?

4-H leaders automatically have liability insurance coverage through the LSU AgCenter when leading a 4-H group or activity approved by the parish 4-H office. However, accident insurance is not automatic. If you choose, your 4-H club can apply for accident insurance. A number of companies offer limited accident insurance coverage for youth groups. The American Income Life Insurance Company offers accident coverage plans at an annual premium of \$1 or \$2 per member. This insurance covers you and your 4-H members from the time you leave home until you return home from any 4-H activity. Insurance is also available for special activities or events on a per-day basis. Forms for each of these plans can be obtained at your parish LSU AgCenter Extension office. Confer with your 4-H agent to verify that you are participating in an official 4-H volunteer capacity.

Where will our club meet?

Where your club meets will probably be determined by the number of members. Out-of school clubs and project groups can meet in public school buildings, churches, fairgrounds, etc. Most schools, communities and other groups are willing to let their facilities be used for 4-H activities.

How often will our club meet?

It is recommended that a 4-H club meet at least eight times during the year, more if desired or needed. This provides continuity for the club as well as time for project development and accomplishment of individual and club goals.

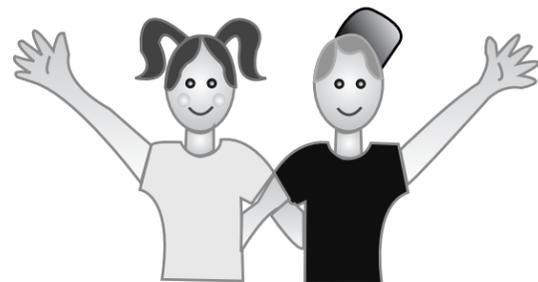
There are several possibilities in choosing a day and time for club or project group meetings, such as:

- School clubs generally meet once a month. Some school clubs meet an additional time as project groups. The project groups may meet during school hours if time permits or once every 2 weeks, after school or on a week night.
- 4-H adventure clubs may meet once a week, after school, alternating business meetings with project work.
- Project and Community Clubs meet once a month on a week night or on a Saturday or Sunday. (Sometimes this works best for clubs with members of a wide age span.)
- Other variations are limited only by the needs of your club members and availability of volunteer leaders.

If you have other questions or concerns, we'd love to help you!

This is what 4-H is all about: the personal development of the boy and girl.

Welcome to the world of 4-H!
4-H volunteer leaders are lay faculty of the LSU AgCenter and Southern University



How can I use the information in this letter: _____

New activities to plan into our club program: _____

Other people who could help us and how they might help: _____

Questions to ask LSU AgCenter Extension staff and other leaders: _____

