

FACTS

ABOUT 4-H

What is 4-H?

4-H is a dynamic nonformal education program primarily for youth in fourth through twelfth grade. While 4-H is cocurricular (which means clubs can meet during the school day), it is also an out-of-school program. In Louisiana, 4-H programs are administered through the LSU AgCenter and Southern University. On the national level, 4-H is administered through the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The program receives funding through federal, state, and local tax dollars. The program is also classified as a non-profit organization by the IRS. We have a National 4-H Council (in Chevy Chase, Maryland), the Louisiana 4-H Foundation and parish 4-H foundations to which people can make tax-deductible contributions.

Volunteers who serve as 4-H leaders are considered lay faculty members of the LSU AgCenter. Through the parish extension office, these volunteers have access to research and resulting curricula developed to have the greatest positive impact on youth.

4-H is America's largest nonformal educational program for youth. More than 6 million youth participate in 4-H under the guidance of 600,000 extension-trained volunteer leaders. It is estimated that nearly 36 million American adults are former 4-H members.

Every state has a team of 4-H youth development staff and subject matter specialists as part of the university's Extension Service. Work in the parishes is directed by Extension youth development professionals, who are often called 4-H agents. Volunteer leaders are instrumental in providing direct leadership and educational support to youth in local communities.

4-H in Louisiana

4-H membership is available to all Louisiana boys and girls in grades four through 12. 4-H members are in every parish, numbering approximately 170,000-plus statewide. Although some may see 4-H as a rural youth organization, today's 4-H members live everywhere.

In Louisiana, about 55% live in small towns (under 10,000), or rural areas; another 15% live in towns and cities with populations of 10-50,000; nearly 30% live in suburbs or cities with more than 50,000.

4-H Clubs

Since 4-H is cocurricular, most 4-H clubs meet once a month during the school day. Project groups within the school club may meet at another time during the month either in school or during out-of-school hours. Some clubs meet outside of schools. A project club is a group of 4-H members working

with an adult volunteer leader on a single project, such as clothing, horses or gardening. Some clubs are organized to include more than one project, such as a 4-H livestock club that includes members with projects in beef, sheep, swine, goats, dairy and poultry.

There are also many 4-H community clubs in Louisiana. Members of these clubs meet together for special programs. Members are enrolled in a wide variety of projects. The community club leader provides overall leadership, but other volunteers work with the members and their projects. These clubs often meet in after-school facilities or community locations.

4-H Projects

4-H members may choose from several different projects offered statewide. Projects are grouped into areas such as animal science, environmental education, energy and

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machines, health/foods/fitness, child development and family life, and personal development.

4-H projects are built around three important principles: 1) subject matter knowledge and skills, 2) personal development, and 3) social interaction among people of different backgrounds, experiences, and ages.

Projects are real-life experiences that help 4-H'ers learn to make decisions. These decisions help members feel responsible for their own actions and lead to personal satisfaction. Members also develop good work habits and learn to work with others, sharing ideas and helping each other. Most project work is done in or near the home so the family can work and be together. 4-H is also about developing leadership skills and character.

4-H Activities

4-H is fun! Members not only belong to clubs but may also participate in activities such as fairs, parish contests, achievement days, club exchanges and special area and statewide events like Marsh Maneuvers, Challenge Camps and the annual 4-H University held on the LSU campus in Baton Rouge. These activities are designed to supplement club and project experiences. They offer opportunities to learn knowledge and practice skills beyond the opportunities available in the local club. They also provide a means for members to meet 4-H'ers from other clubs, communities, and parishes.

4-H Outreach

Because of its association with the land-grant university system, 4-H project curricula are content-rich in research and other useful information. The curricula complement classroom instruction by providing participants with a hands-on way to apply new knowledge, attitudes, and skills.

4-H school enrichment programs consist of four to six sessions that provide at least six hours of learning. The learning activities are presented by classroom teachers or community volunteers. School enrichment programs are relatively new. The current curriculum is available in character education, personal financial management, environmental education, and embryology. Additional topics will be added each year.

Although school clubs are the primary delivery system, Louisiana 4-H reaches young people in a variety of other ways as well. For example, 4-H is a part of the youth phase of the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program

(EFNEP). This program is designed to teach essential nutrition to members of families with limited incomes.

4-H Develops Life Skills

What Are Life Skills?

Life skills are tools we use to cope with daily circumstances, make important decisions, and enhance the quality of our lives. Life skills help people in social, academic, and career settings throughout their lives. 4-H youth development programs have a long tradition of providing individuals with the means for developing life skills. 4-H agents, volunteer leaders, and parents contribute to this tradition.

Individuals must be able to make decisions affecting their daily lives and their futures. They must be able to build mutually beneficial relationships and become productive members of society. They must be able to plan, solve problems, manage resources, and communicate to succeed in life and contribute to their communities.

The 4-H Youth Development Program enables youth to gain social skills by working with others, learning through projects, and spending leisure time with peers and adults. Youth develop interests and abilities through project work, doing community service-learning activities, and practicing leadership responsibilities. Exposure to diverse learning activities helps youth to discover lifelong interests for leisure activities as well as exposure to possible career choices.

4-H International

4-H has grown beyond the United States to nearly all parts of the world. The 4-H model for youth development has been used in more than 80 countries. Today you can find 4-H programs in Africa, Europe and Central and South America.

Volunteer Leaders

Adult volunteer leaders are the mainstay of the 4-H program. Each year over 6,000 adults volunteer their time and talents to help Louisiana 4-H members. In addition, approximately 2,000 teens serve in volunteer roles.

4-H leaders learn along with 4-H members as Extension agents and specialists keep them informed about new information and research. Not only do leaders learn more about the subject they are teaching, but they learn about teaching techniques and working with people. For this reason, 4-H is often referred to as a youth development program as well as an adult education program.

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Although most volunteers lead clubs or project groups, there are other leadership roles in Louisiana 4-H. Some volunteers may assist Extension agents in recruiting members or other volunteers or organizing 4-H work in a particular geographic area. Others are resource leaders, sharing their skills with club leaders. Still, others share their talents as activity leaders for camps and special programs or committee members involved in program planning with 4-H staff.

Extension staff provide training and support for volunteers and are responsible for program direction and the educational aspects of programming. Volunteers are key to program delivery as they transmit information and share their skills in direct contact with youth.

The Four H's

The four H's stand for Head, Heart, Hands, and Health, representing the four-fold training and development that 4-H members receive. "Head, heart and hands" was a familiar phrase with public speakers in the early 1900s. With these three words, educators expressed the liberalizing of conventional education (the three R's) to include practical arts (the three H's).

The three H's were adopted by program organizers to reflect the educational theme of 4-H. A fourth H, for Health, was added several years later. Together the four H's symbolize the development of: the Head, to think, plan and reason; the Heart, to be concerned with the welfare of others, accept the responsibilities of citizenship and develop positive attitudes; the Hands, to be useful, helpful and skillful; and Health, to practice healthful living, enjoy life and use leisure time productively.

The 4-H Emblem

The national 4-H emblem is a green four-leaf clover with the letter H on each leaf. The design, attributed to O.H. Benson, an Iowa school superintendent, was adopted as the national emblem in 1911. Congress has twice passed legislation since that time protecting the 4-H name and emblem. Similar to a copyright, this protection means that the 4-H name and emblem cannot be used without being authorized by the Secretary of Agriculture and national program leaders at USDA, the state director of Extension state 4-H program leaders and 4-H agents.



4-H Colors

Green and white are the 4-H colors. Green is emblematic of springtime, life, and youth; white symbolizes high ideals.

The 4-H Motto

The 4-H motto is "To make the best better." Proposed by Carrie Harrison, a botanist with the U.S. Bureau of Plant Industry, it was adopted in 1927 when the 4-H pledge was introduced.

The 4-H Pledge

I pledge

My Head to clearer thinking (line 1)

My Heart to greater loyalty (line 2)

My Hands to larger service and (line3)

My Health to better living (line 4)

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

In repeating the pledge, members raise their right hands to the side of their heads when speaking line 1; lower hands to the heart when speaking line 2; extend hands, palms upward, when speaking line 3; and stand straight when speaking lines 4 and 5.

The pledge was adopted in 1927 during the first National 4-H Club Camp in Washington, D.C. Otis Hall, state 4-H leader in Kansas, was responsible for the original wording, which remained unchanged until 1973 when the words "and my world" were added.

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How it began

What is now 4-H began in 1902, when boys' and girls' agricultural clubs seemed to organize in many different places simultaneously. These early efforts were associated with rural schools or through "Farmers' Institutes" organized by agricultural colleges to bring the latest scientific information to farmers and their families. The first states to become involved were New York, Ohio, Texas, Nebraska, Illinois and Oregon. Louisiana's first 4-H Club, originally called a Corn Club, was started in 1908 at Avoyelles High School in nearby Moreauville.

In 1914 the U.S. Congress passed the Smith-Lever Act, formally establishing extension work on a cooperative basis among the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the state land-grant colleges, and counties in each state. Funds were included for youth programs that became known as 4-H in 1924. At that time, boys' and girls' industrial clubs were redirected along the lines of 4-H in other states. Boys enrolled in projects in farm clubs, and girls enrolled in sewing, cooking and canning clubs.

After Smith-Lever funds became available to Louisiana State University in 1914, the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service was given the responsibility for club work under an agreement with the Louisiana Department of Education, which incorporated 4-H programming into the school system and created the first 4-H school club.

Around the 1950s, 4-H went through several changes nationally as it expanded into urban areas. Programming became more focused on life skill development and helping

youth become contributing, productive, and self-directed members of society. Additionally, clubs became more inclusive and integrated.

Today, 4-H has an expansive reach, serving youth in rural, urban, and suburban communities. Since 1914 more than 40 million youth from the United States, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Guam have participated in 4-H programs. 4-H members worldwide are now tackling national and global issues, from food security to childhood obesity and food safety. From agricultural and animal sciences to rocketry, robotics, environmental protection, and computer science – 4-H programming enables youth around the world to take on the leading challenges of the 21st century.

TO MAKE THE BEST BETTER



Visit our website: www.LSUAgCenter.com/4H

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PUB2860 (Online Only) 10/20 Rev.
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