



LETTERS TO NEW LEADERS



Letter 2: Getting Started with a 4-H Project

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Dear Leader,

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

How to Recruit 4-H Members- And How Many Should We Have?

First of all, how many members? 4-H projects can have as few as two to three members or as many as the leader feels can be effectively included in the group. Some suggest that 6 to 10 members per adult leader is an optimum number. The optimum number of project members for your group will depend in part on your project area. It also depends on how many co-leaders or assistant leaders will be working with you. Involving teens to serve as co-leaders may also increase the number of members your project can support. Limit your first group to a number with which you and your co-leader feel comfortable!

As for recruiting members, it is seldom hard to do. If there are exciting things happening in the 4-H club or project the word gets out. Contact your community club leader. They usually have names of people who want to participate in your project. In most projects you can continue to add members as long as it is practical. In San Diego County there is open enrollment and youth can join 4H through out the year in most 4-H clubs or groups. Your club or group may have a recruiting program or other ideas for recruiting new members. Because 4-H receives federal and state funds, we must be certain our programs are made available to all people equally. If you have any questions about eligibility contact the 4H Staff.

As for recruiting adult volunteers--you may find it helpful to recruit some adults to help with the project leadership such as co-leaders or assistant leaders. Interested parents, 4-H alumni, or friends are often willing to help.

This gives the leader much needed assistance and also provides continuity for project meetings in case of a leader's absence.





“All properly enrolled 4-H leaders and members automatically receive accident/sickness coverage.”



How is My Group Enrolled as an Official 4-H Project?

Your county office of the Cooperative Extension has the necessary individual enrollment forms for potential members to complete. The youth must submit a completed 4-H enrollment form before they start the 4-H club or project. Official enrollment is usually done through your 4-H Community Club. If your project is one that is not identified on the enrollment form or is one created by you and the 4H members then you may need to complete a self or group determined project form at the beginning of the project year. The form is available at the 4H Office. Work with your community club leader for assistance or call the 4H Office staff.

California uses a computer-based enrollment system, which means the enrollment form must be filled out completely and accurately. Be sure to check the codes listed on the back of the form. The 4-H year starts each September 1st and runs through August 30th. All 4-H members and leaders must re-enroll every year. Check with the community club leader for the due date for enrollment. Enrollment comes through the community club leader or some one designated in your community club to handle enrollment. It is a good idea to enroll promptly so you and your members stay continually on the mailing list and receive the monthly newsletter. Check with your Community Club leader to determine if there is any enrollment

deadline for the club. In addition, some clubs also have a deadline for enrollment additions and changes in order for members to be eligible to participate in state and county fairs and other activities.

What Can Project Members Expect?

An outline of the project goals, related events, requirements and costs given at the first meeting with parents and members.

- Regular meetings with the leaders full attention.
- A well planned meeting with materials available and skills learned,
- An opportunity to do a demonstration at project or community meetings to learn organization and public speaking
- Help provide information on entering projects in fairs, shows and other events.
- That the leader's skills in the project area are up to date or that the leader is actively learning along with the members.
- To be allowed to do so the project work on his or her own. A planned timetable for when individual project reports are due.
- To help the leader if asked to be given roles in leadership and responsibility.
- A safe meeting environment which is conducive to learning and free of distraction for the members.

Are There Dues for 4-H Members?

There is a small annual program fee for both members and leaders. Some clubs also have to charge a fee to help pay for club newsletters or other club activities.

What About Insurance?

4-H leaders automatically have limited liability insurance coverage through the University of California when leading a 4-H group or 4-H activity. This coverage is for officially enrolled leaders who have completed county and state requirements for enrollment, orientation and fingerprinting. Please read the “Risk” brochure available from the 4H Office for details. All properly enrolled 4-H leaders and members automatically receive accident/sickness coverage. This insurance covers medical costs up to a certain amount for illness or injuries that take place at 4-H events or activities. For more information, please see the brochure entitled “California 4-H Accident/Sickness Insurance Program.”

Where Will Our Project Meet?

Most project groups meet at the leader's home. This is usually easiest for the leaders. Groups may also rotate meetings from one member's home to another so that each member has the opportunity to host. Project meetings can be held at commercial facilities such as businesses or workshops but if the owners want you or members to sign a hold harmless clause or be additional insured with the University insurance you need to refer the matter to the 4H Office. You cannot sign any such agreement as a project leader. Most club meetings are held at schools or community centers. Such facilities are sometimes available for project meetings as well. Where ever you choose to hold 4H meetings of any type you need to be sure the location does not become a barrier for members who want to attend.

How Often Will Our Project Meet?

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

- Once a week after school (this works well for elementary age students)
- Once every two weeks, after school, or on a week-night

- Once a month, on a week night
- Once a month, on a Saturday or Sunday (sometimes this works best for clubs with members of a wide age span)
- Other variations, limited only by the needs of your project members

It is recommended that a 4-H project meet between five and ten times during the year, more often if desired or needed. You should meet with project members at least once each month for a project meeting, field trip or related project event while the project is on-going. This provides continuity for the project as well as time for project development and accomplishment of individual and project goals. Some projects can be taught on a short-term or seasonal basis. Projects can start anytime during the year.

Who Pays for Project Materials?

4-H members should pay for the project materials they use. Members and their families need to be notified at the beginning of the project what the estimated project costs will be for the year. Leaders can purchase needed items and have members reimburse them, or they may supply

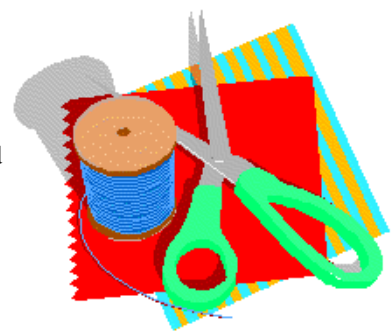
members with a list of items needed for each meeting. Leaders should not be reimbursed for more than the value of items purchased and can not charge members for their time. Some leaders have secured donations from local businesses to keep project costs low for their members. Members also can hold fund raisers to collect the money needed to pay for their project supplies.

Where Do I Find 4-H Curriculum Materials and Resources?

The 4-H Office has a collection of curriculum for a wide variety of projects on file. Leaders can browse through the collection and the 4-H Office will make copies of material you want to use in your project. Also there are catalogues you can request where you can order 4-H curriculum and other resources. Request a free copy of the catalogue from the 4-H Office. Volunteers have also searched on the internet and approached local businesses for material they can use in their project meetings. Experienced 4H Leaders can also provide you with tips and resources they have developed over the years. 4-H Staff are willing to help you if you have any questions.



“A caring 4-H adult volunteer serves as a guide, mentor and role model.”



How can I use the information in this letter:

1. New activities to plan into our 4-H Program:

2. Other people who could help us and how they might help:

3. Questions to ask Cooperative extension staff and other leaders:



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REFERENCE MATERIALS

Letter 2: Getting Started with a 4-H Project
4-H Enrollment Form

California 4-H Accident/Sickness Insurance Program

Publication Catalog

“Risk” brochure

Welcome to the world of 4-H!

