

Section III - - 4-H Projects

The 4-H project is the “gateway” to the rest of the 4-H program, but perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the project is the “gateway” to youth.

Projects provided the basis of the 4-H program by offering various educational experiences. Enrolling in a project will help the member “learn by doing” as well as learn “why” things happen the way they do.

Why Projects?

The project is a teaching tool that can be used to develop many desirable traits in addition to the more evident project skills.

Project work is a means to an end and not the end in itself. The development of the individual is the most important consideration.

What Are Projects?

Projects are real life experiences that help 4-H’ers learn to make sound decisions. Projects put the hands and mind to work.

The selection of 4-H projects has expanded greatly over the years. There are now 50 different projects with 135 different phases or degrees of advancement. Most of the projects have been planned with several phases so that members may advance to more difficult and challenging activities.

4-H projects take on a wide variety of interests and activities. They are designed to attract members regardless of their place of residence, economic status, or race.

What Are The Objectives Of 4-H Projects?

- Create a sense of ownership
- Give a feeling of achievement
- Strengthen family and community ties
- Provide members the opportunity to:
 - Learn project skills
 - Develop and understand project knowledge
 - Develop good attitudes
 - Assume responsibility
 - Provide healthful competition
 - Make meaningful decisions
- Provide leisure time activities
- Explore career opportunities and thus the need for continued education. All projects are in a sense career explorative, giving each member a taste of the work and responsibilities involved.



How Do I Select Projects?

- *A Guide to 4-H Project Selection* explains the different projects that are offered in 4-H. The guide appears as an insert in the August issue of the Kansas 4-H Journal. If you do not have a copy, check with your club's community leaders or the Extension office.
- Parents and members should know and fully understand what is expected of the 4-H'er before enrolling in the project.
- Projects are selected early in the 4-H year when enrollment cards are filled out. Usually younger members should limit their projects to one or two. Older, experienced members are able to complete several different ones, including those that are more difficult.

In selecting projects, consider:

- Does it meet the needs and interest of the member?
- Is the project challenging him/her physically, mentally, or educationally?
- How much time does the member have and how much time does the project require?
- What time of the year does most of the activity for the project take place?
- Is the project acceptable to you as parents and does it fit into the family needs and situation?
- How much will the project cost?
- Is adequate space and equipment available?
- Is there an opportunity for ownership and management responsibilities?
- Are there leaders to help with the project, or are you willing to help the member with the project?

How Are Projects Conducted?

Project work is conducted through various activities and events such as:

- Project meetings in the local club
- Demonstrations and talks at regular club meetings
- Tours
- Family activities or work at home
- Exhibiting at shows and fairs
- Record keeping



What Is The Role Of The Project Leader?

4-H project leaders are people who have an interest in a particular area. They are willing to share their time, talents and efforts with a group of young people.

You could be a project leader! It doesn't take an expert to be a project leader. The most important ingredient for project leaders is that they be interested in working with youth. If you would consider being a project leader, visit with your club's community leaders or parent advisory committee members.

Training meetings for project leaders are conducted on the county level. Also, many projects have guides to assist leaders.

Many clubs have a policy that unless more than two or three members are enrolled in a project, no project leader will be obtained. Parents will be expected to help the member with his project in this case.

Who Are The 4-H Leaders?

Key persons helping youth in local groups are the adult and older teen volunteers. These volunteers, most of them parents, contribute their time and share their interests and talents. Support by parents is important to the success of any 4-H group.

The most important ingredients for project leaders is that they be sincerely interested in working with youth. If you are considering being a project leader, visit with your club's community leader(s) or parent committee members. New leaders will need to complete a Volunteer Information Profile (VIP) form for review and approval by the county VIP committee.

Club Project Leaders

Purpose

To guide and support 4-H members with project work (learning experiences structured around a special interest). To work cooperatively with the 4-H organizational club leader, other leaders in the club, parents and club members for positive learning experiences.

Responsibilities

- Help members and their parents arrive at project selections that are challenging but within reach of the individual.
- Share your knowledge of the project with members through meetings, tours, individual consultations and written references.
- With the 4-H'ers, develop a schedule and a method for personally notifying members and families of when to attend meetings and what will be done at them.
- Meet a sufficient number of times so members feel good about the subject matter they are learning.
- Invite other volunteers to help when the opportunity arises.



- Update your skills in: (a) subject matter and (b) human relations through leader workshops, consultations with other leaders, Extension staff and reading.
- Maintain sensitivity and respond to the individual differences of 4-H members such as their interests, abilities, personal needs and family support.
- Help members find additional learning experiences and resources for themselves.
- Relate project experiences to everyday life and to career possibilities for members.
- Encourage members to attend and/or participate in broadened learning experiences offered at the county, area or state level.
- Recognize personal growth of individuals regularly through praise, added responsibility and trust.

Resources Available:

Project Literature
 Project Selection Guide
 Questions and Answers (4-H 496)
 Project Leader Planning Guide (4-H 211)
 Leader Training Meetings

Assistance and advice from:

4-H Community Club Leader
 County 4-H Project Coordinator
 Experienced leaders in the project your are leading
 4-H Parents' Committee
 Club Project Leader Coordinator

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