Frequently Asked Questions
About 4-H Participation Fees in Clackamas County

How much will I pay in fees now?
Each club member will pay $25 per year in participation fees if they enroll or re-enroll by January 15. If they enroll after that, the participation fee will be $30. If there are more than two children in a family, we will only collect fees for the first two, for a family total of $50 or $60.

What will the state participation fee pay for? Does our county get any of the money?
The state fees will go into the portion of the budget that pays for county staff. In Clackamas County, some of our agent salaries are paid with state dollars and some are paid with county dollars. Although we do not get our participation fee money directly returned to our county, it is being used to support our program. The state office is also trying to help families by making more publications available for free (by internet download and by CD).

Do I have to pay the state participation fee?
Yes. There is no “county only” option. Since all club members benefit from having state-supported staff, all club members pay the fee.

Why is there a fee increase on January 15?
In order to make commitments to pay the 4-H staff, the money has to be “in the bank” in the first part of the year. The fee increase was created to encourage members to re-enroll earlier in the year so that the state office could create an accurate budget.

When the budget improves, will the state participation fee go away?
Although this year’s funding is worse than usual, the truth is that state funding for 4-H and the Extension Service has declined over the past decades. The state fee is likely to be permanent, and may increase in the future.

Why are we paying a county participation fee at all if the special district was passed?
When we passed the special district, we promised the voters a number of things. One promise was that we would hire new 4-H staff and increase the size of our 4-H club, camp, and school programs. A lot of our budget is needed to fulfill that promise. Our budget does not include the elimination or reduction of participation fees for Extension activities. Fees are a way of having those people who use our services the most pay a higher share of the cost. People who pay a fee are more likely to take a program seriously and apply what they have learned. Our fees are much, much lower than the total cost per member that it takes to run the 4-H program. About 95% of the cost for a member to participate in 4-H is paid by taxpayers and grants, leaving about 5% to be paid by participation fees.

What does the county participation fee cover?
The county fees cover services to members like county fair costs, leader training materials, record book and advancement materials, the newsletter, informational mailings, and training for 4-H support staff.

Do I need to write separate checks for the state and county fees?
No. Write one check to OSU Extension Service for the full amount. We will send the state its portion of the fees when your check is deposited.

What if someone can't afford the fees?
If you have families in your club who can’t afford the fee, we encourage you to work out a solution for your club. Some clubs fundraise and use the proceeds to pay for all their members’ fees. If that is not possible, we will waive the fee for families in great need. The parent or guardian should contact the Extension Agent to request a fee waiver.
Will the change in participation fees change the amount of money that I owe to my club?
The participation fee is not the same as club dues. Some clubs collect the participation fees with club dues, and then write one check for the whole club’s fees when enrollments are turned in to the Extension office. That is still OK, and if your club does it that way then you will probably write a bigger check to your club this year. Some clubs have charged members and leaders for insurance, and they will not need to do that anymore. If you have specific questions about the amount of dues your club charges, talk to the Extension Agent.

Do I have to pay extra fees to be in more than one club or more than one project?
No. Pay once, with the first club that is enrolled with the Extension office each year.

How do I add or change projects? Is there a deadline for that?
Once they are enrolled, members can add, delete, or change projects simply by having their leader contact the 4-H Secretary. The member’s list of projects in the 4-H database on May 1 will determine which projects they can enter in fair.

How does the new participation fee deadline apply to the horse enrollment deadline?
At this time, Horse members must enroll by January 1 to participate in Horse Fair. The participation fees increase on January 15. The Horse Advisory is considering extending their deadline so that it matches the fee deadline. Check the December newsletter for updates.

How does the Accident Insurance work?
The Extension office will pay an annual premium to American Income Life for their 4-H accident insurance policy. All 4-H members and leaders will be covered as long as their enrollments are current and the injury took place during a 4-H activity. The policy is primary insurance and pays a specified amount for different types of injuries. If you need to submit a claim, you can get the form online or from the Extension office.

Should our club still take out an accident insurance policy?
No. The policy that we have promoted to clubs is the same one that we will be paying for all members. If your club does risky fundraisers (such as horse shows), you will still need to take out a liability policy for those events.

Is there any change to ordering 4-H materials, or how much they cost?
Not in most cases. We continue to charge the listed price for our publications, which pays for our printing or purchase cost. Most smaller publications are also available for free online. For those who don’t have internet access, the state 4-H office will soon be releasing a CD with all of the free publications on it.