Oregon 4-H Advancement Programs

An introduction for leaders, parents, and members

4-H advancement programs consist of a series of steps that provide a framework for progressive learning within a specific project area. Advancement programs encourage 4-H members to learn at their own speed based on their interests and abilities. Advancement programs are self-paced, and age and skill-level appropriate. Advancement programs can also be a tremendous help to members as they set their goals each year. In addition, advancement programs are useful to Junior Leaders and more experienced 4-H members who wish to work with younger or less experienced members.

Benefits of 4-H Advancement Programs

Advancement programs:

- Make projects more interesting
- Assist members in setting and achieving goals
- Encourage self-paced learning
- Help members learn more about their projects
- Encourage age-appropriate skill level building
- Provide new, enjoyable experiences
- Help prepare members for participation in certain activities and events
- Provide recognition for work done well
- Provide incentive to members to stay in a project over a longer period of time

Life skill development and 4-H advancement programs

Participating in 4-H advancement programs is instrumental in the development of life skills, a major emphasis of 4-H programming. Young people who participate in 4-H are not just gaining knowledge about their project area, they also develop skills they will use throughout their life. Specifically, the 4-H advancement programs are designed to develop life skills in:

- Learning to learn
- Making decisions
- Keeping records
- Planning and organizing
- Achieving goals
- Completing a project or task
- Communicating
- Being responsible
- Developing self-esteem
About the Advancement Program Steps

The advancement steps are written to provide a learning sequence for all members. Although all members should start with Step 1, the advancement program is designed so a 4-H member may advance as fast as he or she desires based on interest, effort, and ability. A fourth or fifth grade 4-H member may take 2 or 3 years to complete Step 1; and eighth or ninth grade member may complete one or two steps in a year.

Members should work on one step at a time. There are, however, times when a member may accomplish an activity in another step before completing the step on which he or she is working. Recognize that if there is considerable difference in the level of skill within a group, members may be working on several levels of the program at one time. Much of the information leaders and members need to complete advancement steps can be found in project materials. In advanced steps, members will need to refer to other sources.

Recording progress in the advancement program

Leaders should encourage members to keep the advancement program with their records. Doing so allows leaders and members to evaluate the 4-H experience, review progress, and establish goals for the future. Upon completing an activity, the member fills in the date and has the leader initial the record.

Reviewing advancement progress

Once a member has completed an advancement step, the leader should then arrange for a review of the experience. This review often is conducted through an interview process.

If it is feasible, the interview can be conducted by someone other than the leader. It is a valuable experience for members to be interviewed by others who have expertise in a particular area. Such interviews help prepare members for job interviews and other life experiences.

Leaders also may want to arrange for an advancement chairperson or committee to review each member soon after he or she has competed the step requirements.

The review is also an excellent opportunity to involve parents in club activities. Several parents can serve on the committee, and two or three of them can conduct the interviews. The interviewers should be familiar with the 4-H program, its objectives, and the project area.

The advancement chairperson or committee should approve the advancement only when they are satisfied the member is ready to continue to the next step.
How to use the advancement program

The advancement program should be presented at the beginning of the 4-H year.

Review what was done last year

Before deciding on specific things to include in the club program, leaders should review what the members and club did previously. A review will allow discussion on the following questions:

- “What did we do?”
- “What did we like?”
- “What needs improvement or expansion”? 
- “Was everyone involved”? 

Review the members’ present interests

Encourage members and parents to express their interest, needs, and goals. This allows them to feel important and to be committed to the final club program.

Share county/statewide special programs

Tell your members about activities available to them through your county or the state. Share your special interests with members and parents. This allows members and parents to learn about new opportunities and helps determine whether the club should set specific goals related to them.

Develop your program

If your group of 4-H participants is small, all the members should be involved in determining the group goals for the year. If the group is large, a special committee may identify the goals for the year’s program.

Base your goals on the current members’ range of grades, levels of achievement, and interests. Design the program to meet the needs and interest of each member. Establish goals to meet the interests and needs of youth, to allow individual achievement for each member, and to be within range of accomplishment for each member.

If your club has a wide range of grades, interests and abilities, divide the club into small groups to work with a Junior Leader. This enhances the learning and satisfaction of all members.
Recognizing advancement

The National 4-H Recognition Model shows five different ways to recognize 4-H members.

1. Participation
   This type of recognition program emphasizes the importance of acknowledging young people who have been involved in 4-H educational experiences. For some youth, participation in a 4-H learning experience is an accomplishment.

2. Progress toward self-set goals
   Parents and other adults can help youth set realistic goals. Recognition for progress toward self-set goals, no matter how small, is an integral part of this type of recognition.

3. Achievement of standards of excellence
   Standards of excellence are established by experts in a given area. By measuring personal progress against standards of excellence, youth can gain insight into their own efforts and abilities.

4. Peer competition
   Peer competition is a part of the model for recognition. This type of recognition subjectively identifies, in a concrete time and place, the best team or individual. It is a strong motivator for some youth but is inappropriate for youth under age eight.

5. Cooperation
   Learning and working together promotes high achievement. Cooperation may take advantage of all the skills represented in the group, as well as the process by with the group approaches the learning task/goal. Everyone is rewarded.

Advancement Certificates

The 4-H Advancement Program is an excellent way to promote and recognize members’ efforts in progressing toward self-set goals and achieving standards of excellence through learning. Advancement certificates that are customized for each project area are available from your local OSU Extension Office. Contact a county 4-H staff member to request advancement certificates in your project area.

Earning an advancement certificate deserves recognition. When members have completed a level of advancement, recognize it. This could be done at an achievement meeting or other community event. Extension 4-H staff members also can help leaders prepare pieces for newspaper and radio releases on the members’ achievement.
My ________________ Advancement Record

Members may choose to complete advancements from any of the three following categories (Project Related Options, Personal Development Options and Citizen Pride Options) in any order. Once a member has completed seven options they have completed a step. For more information please refer to Step Completion on page 8.

### Project Related Options

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<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Date Passed</th>
<th>Approved By</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Present a demonstration to your club on ____________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>2) Present a demonstration to your club on ____________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>3) Present a demonstration to your club on ____________________________</td>
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<td>4) Complete your 4-H project record</td>
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<td>5) Attend a presentation on a topic related to your 4-H project</td>
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<td>6) Go on a tour with your 4-H club</td>
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<td>7) Help with a club fundraiser</td>
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<td>8) Develop an educational display related to your project</td>
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<tr>
<td>9) Learn a new project related skill type of skill: ____________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>10) Learn a new project related skill type of skill: __________________</td>
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Additional project related options approved by your club leader

10) ___________________________________________  ___________  ___________
11) ___________________________________________  ___________  ___________
12) ___________________________________________  ___________  ___________
13) ___________________________________________  ___________  ___________
14) ___________________________________________  ___________  ___________
15) ___________________________________________  ___________  ___________

Personal Development Options

1) Lead the Pledge of Allegiance  ___________  ___________
2) Lead the 4-H Pledge  ___________  ___________
3) Lead a game at a 4-H meeting  ___________  ___________
4) Write a news story for a local paper  ___________  ___________
5) Participate in a radio ad for 4-H  ___________  ___________
6) Present a demonstration or illustrated talk to a group other than your 4-H club.  ___________  ___________
7) Serve as a Junior Leader  ___________  ___________
8) Serve as a chairman of a club committee  ___________  ___________
9) Serve as a host for a 4-H meeting.  ___________  ___________
10) Participate in an out of county 4-H event  ___________  ___________
11) Attend OSU 4-H Summer Conference  ___________  ___________
12) Attend the State Fair  ___________  ___________
13) Serve as a clerk at fair or another county contest  ___________  ___________
14) Assist with set up at county fair  ___________  ___________
15) Arrange a tour for your 4-H club  ___________  ___________
16) Secure a speaker for you 4-H club  ___________  ___________
17) Attend another 4-H club’s meeting __________  __________
18) Attend a record book workshop __________  __________
19) Teach a member how to judge a project __________  __________
20) Help clean up or set up for a county 4-H event __________  __________
21) Host a knowledge bowl game for you club __________  __________
22) Work with a leader to plan goals and events for the year __________  __________
23) Supervise members as they fill out club or fair enrollment forms __________  __________
24) Serve as a club officer __________  __________
25) Help members understand the process of fair or another county contest __________  __________
26) Participate in a 4-H Summer Day Camp __________  __________
27) Share information about 4-H to a friend who is thinking of joining 4-H __________  __________

Additional personal development options approved by your club leader

28) ____________________________________________  __________  __________
29) ____________________________________________  __________  __________
30) ____________________________________________  __________  __________
31) ____________________________________________  __________  __________
32) ____________________________________________  __________  __________
33) ____________________________________________  __________  __________

Citizen Pride Options

Date Passed  Approved By

1) Participate in a Community Service Project __________  __________
2) Do a chore for someone who needs help __________  __________
3) Do something to improve your neighborhood __________  __________
4) Visit with a county official about your 4-H project __________  __________
5) Participate in a parade as a 4-H member

Additional citizen pride options approved by your club leader

6) ___________________________________________  _________  _________

7) ___________________________________________  _________  _________

8) ___________________________________________  _________  _________

9) ___________________________________________  _________  _________

10) ___________________________________________  _________  _________

11) ___________________________________________  _________  _________

Record of Completion

Once a member had completed seven advancement options a member has completed a step. After a leader has signed off on the completed step bring this record to the OSU Extension Office and an advancement certificate will be made for the members to be included in their record book.

Step 1   Date _____      Leader Signature___________________________

Step 2   Date _____      Leader Signature___________________________

Step 3   Date _____      Leader Signature___________________________

Step 4   Date _____      Leader Signature___________________________

Step 5   Date _____      Leader Signature___________________________

After completed Step 5 members are encouraged to take part in the Junior Leader Advancement program.