

Opportunities for 4-H Members



Once you have been to a few club meetings and are involved in your project areas, you will want to know about more ways to be involved in 4-H. Contact your local Extension office to ask about the many opportunities available to 4-H members. Watch for announcements in your county 4-H newsletter, and find more information on state and county 4-H websites.

In Your Club

Social and special events. In addition to regular meetings, field trips, and activity days, some clubs also hold social events, such as potluck dinners, picnics, swimming parties, trail rides, and campouts. Many clubs hold a special recognition event at the end of the 4-H year to acknowledge members for their contributions and achievements. Usually, families and friends are invited to help celebrate and learn about club activities and goals. You can help plan these events.

Club leadership. There are many leadership roles in a club. You can serve as a club officer, such as president, vice-president, secretary, or recorder. You can also host a meeting, lead pledges, or take attendance.

Intermediate and senior members can become Junior Leaders and work with adult volunteers to help plan, teach, and lead club activities. Senior members can become Teen Leaders and act as primary club leaders (with adult supervision). For more information on Junior and Teen Leadership projects, see *Leading the Way*, publication 4-H 6520.

Community service. One 4-H goal is to help you become a caring citizen of your community. You can work toward this goal by helping your club choose and conduct a community service project.

Sometimes clubs decide on a long-term project to be developed or repeated over several years.

Many clubs share something related to their project area with people in retirement or nursing homes, such as bringing pets or fair exhibits for residents to see, making special holiday favors, or just visiting. Some clubs work on environmental projects, such as cleaning up trash, planting flowers and shrubs, building and maintaining nature paths, or hosting special events for young children.

Service learning. This is community service with a twist. Members have a more meaningful experience when they study issues related to their community service project. For instance, your club can learn about issues related to homelessness and then volunteer in a soup kitchen. Or your club can clear a nature trail after learning about the area's native plants, wildlife population, or history.

In Your County

This section describes some common county 4-H activities. Your county may hold more or different events. It's helpful to know what these are at the beginning of the 4-H year so you can plan what you want to do, meet entry deadlines, and have time to practice or prepare.

Project workshops. Many counties hold workshops in specific 4-H project areas, such as horse clinics, dog obedience trainings, food safety classes, and natural resources field days. Sometimes these are also offered in neighboring counties or on a regional or statewide basis. You can attend these workshops. And if you have experience in the project area, you can also help plan or teach.

Contests. Regularly scheduled 4-H contests may include food preparation contests, fashion revues, and animal shows. Ask which contests are held in your county. Contests provide learning opportunities, challenge your skills, and help you set goals and evaluate your work. You may find that competition helps you fulfill the 4-H motto: “To make the best better.”

Judging and identification contests. Many counties hold judging and identification contests in a variety of 4-H project areas. In these events, you evaluate classes of three or four items, rank the items from highest to lowest quality, and support your decisions by giving written or oral reasons for the placings. In some contests, members with the highest scores may be eligible to participate at a state event.

Presentations. To practice communication skills, you can give short, informative talks (called presentations) on any topic. You may decide to share what you’ve learned in a project area, or you can choose a topic you want to learn more about. You can work alone or with another member.

Give your presentation to your own club, then at public events, and finally at your county 4-H presentation contest. Your presentation may be eligible for State Fair or other state events. After you have experience giving presentations, help teach this skill to younger members.

County fair. The county fair is a major activity because it gives you the opportunity to exhibit what you’ve learned in your project areas during the 4-H year. Be sure you know the rules, entry deadlines, class requirements, and schedule. Find this information in your county’s fair book (either in print or online), and contact your local Extension office if you have questions.

Summer camps. Some counties offer day or overnight summer camps. Ask your local Extension office for a camp program, which will list age requirements and schedules. Older members can be camp counselors.

County 4-H Ambassadors. Members in grades 9 through 12 can be involved in the 4-H Ambassador program. County 4-H Ambassadors typically help plan and emcee county events, such as awards programs and information nights. They also

promote and represent 4-H at community events. Selection criteria, requirements, and responsibilities vary by county; contact your local Extension office for information.

Teen leadership clubs. Your county may have a teen leadership club, council, or advisory committee. These groups usually include members from all project areas. Teen club members often serve on county 4-H advisory committees and other community boards. They may plan and teach at leadership retreats, help with 4-H afterschool programs, or be camp counselors.

At the State Level

State Fair and state contests. Static exhibits that qualify at the county level may be sent to State Fair for judging and display. Contest participants and animal science exhibitors who qualify at county events may be eligible to participate at State Fair. State Fair contests may include fashion revue, food preparation, presentations, and judging and identification contests. Some state project contests, such as the Spring Horse Classic and the Livestock Judging Contest, take place outside of State Fair.

Older members can apply to volunteer at State Fair. State Fair Teen Staff responsibilities include checking in exhibits, clerking for judges, setting up exhibit displays, and answering questions from the public. Contact your local Extension office for information.

4-H Summer Conference. Each summer, Oregon State University hosts 4-H Summer Conference for youth who have completed grades 7 through 12. During this event, you can attend a wide range of classes, explore the university, examine career possibilities, listen to motivational speakers, and do a community service project. You’ll also make new friends from around the state and have fun at several social events, including a dance, pool party, and recreational games.

Activate Oregon. Youth ages 12 to 19 can attend the annual Activate Oregon Youth Summit and explore successful ways to use the power of youth voices. This event is an opportunity for you to learn leadership and gain skills for working beside adults to make decisions in organizations and communities that have positive benefits for everyone.

State 4-H Ambassadors. County 4-H Ambassadors in grade 10 or 11 can apply to be on the State 4-H Ambassador team. The primary responsibilities of State 4-H Ambassadors are public relations and promoting 4-H. They also serve as hosts and emcees at 4-H Summer Conference, State Fair, the Oregon Leaders Forum, and other state events. Contact the State 4-H Office for information.

State advisory committees. Older members can apply to be on one of the many state advisory committees. These include project committees, such as dog, natural sciences, and expressive arts; activity committees, such as 4-H Summer Conference and Activate Oregon; and administrative committees, such as the 4-H Leaders Association Executive Council and Oregon 4-H Foundation Board. Depending on the committee, you may review curriculum, give input on guidelines and resources, provide expertise in a particular area, evaluate programs, or help at events.

In-state exchange programs. 4-H sponsors exchange programs that provide an opportunity for you, and even your family, to gain a broader understanding of the world around you and see things from a new perspective. Some counties participate in exchanges with 4-H groups from throughout Oregon or other states.

State awards and scholarships. Intermediate members can apply for state awards in citizenship, leadership, communications, and community service. Oregon 4-H also offers many scholarships for senior members who plan to attend college. Contact your local Extension office for information about how to apply.

At the Regional and National Levels

There are several regional and national 4-H activities for senior members. Ask your local Extension office how to get involved or apply.

Western Regional 4-H Leaders Forum. This forum is held annually (usually in the spring) in one of 13 western states. Members can help teach workshops, host, or set up the event.

National 4-H Conference. This annual conference is held at the National 4-H Center in Chevy Chase, Maryland, and some events take place in the greater Washington, D.C. area. The primary focus is promoting civic engagement. Each year, two to four Oregon delegates are selected. Applications must be submitted by October 31. Delegates are expected to share what they've learned when they return.

National 4-H Congress. This event, held over Thanksgiving weekend in Atlanta, Georgia, brings together more than 1,000 delegates from all over the United States and Puerto Rico. Oregon delegates must submit a special resume, and the recognition committee typically selects delegates who demonstrate considerable breadth and depth of 4-H experience.

Project competitions. Some project areas, such as horse, poultry and livestock, have national competitions. The selection process for state teams varies.

Global Citizenship and Cultural Immersion

The world is constantly changing. What happens in other countries and on other continents affects each of us in some way, and our collective survival depends on awareness of the world and its peoples. You can learn more about this by participating in 4-H global citizenship and cultural immersion activities.

4-H Japanese Exchange Program. Each year, Oregon hosts more than 40 Japanese youth through this program. There are also opportunities for older youth and adults to experience Japan's culture and customs.

4-H International Exchange Ambassador Programs. Oregon families can apply to host youth from Argentina, Australia, Costa Rica, Finland, Norway, and other countries. These programs also allow older youth and adults to travel and experience new cultures and customs.

International 4-H Youth Exchange (IFYE). Youth ages 18 to 25 can have an IFYE experience for 2 to 6 months. Countries may include Finland, Germany, Taiwan, and others.

Get Involved

As you can see, there are many opportunities available to 4-H members, in project areas as well as in citizenship and leadership. The more you participate in club, county, state, regional, national, and international activities, the more you will gain from your 4-H experience.

Useful Websites

Oregon 4-H	http://oregon.4h.oregonstate.edu/
Presentations	http://oregon.4h.oregonstate.edu/presentations
State committees	http://oregon.4h.oregonstate.edu/staff-advisory-councils-and-committees
State awards	http://oregon.4h.oregonstate.edu/state-4h-recognition-awards
Scholarships	http://oregon.4h.oregonstate.edu/oregon-4h-scholarships
Summer Conference	http://oregon.4h.oregonstate.edu/4h-summer-conference
Activate Oregon	http://oregon.4h.oregonstate.edu/activate-oregon
National 4-H Conference	http://oregon.4h.oregonstate.edu/national-conference
National 4-H Congress	http://oregon.4h.oregonstate.edu/national-4h-congress
Exchange programs	http://oregon.4h.oregonstate.edu/4h-world-citizenship-project-overview

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