4-H Frequently Asked Questions

What is 4-H?

4-H is an informal education program for young people ages 5-19, supported through the cooperation of federal, state and local governments. We are the largest out-of-school youth program in North Carolina and the United States.

Through a variety of learning experiences and project work, youth develop skills that will enable them to be competent, coping, caring, and contributing members of society. No matter what the subject matter, young people are ultimately practicing life skills like: decision-making, problem-solving, relating to others, planning and organization, record-keeping, communication, leadership, dealing with change, and self-discipline.

Isn't 4-H for farm kids?

4-H is for all young people, regardless of where they live, what their backgrounds are, or what interests them. Today in Mecklenburg County, 4-H members are from the city, from the country, and everywhere in between. They participate in a variety of hands-on learning experiences to develop long-term life skills.

In the early 1900’s 4-H programs began as a way to improve agricultural production by teaching children new methods and skills gained in the university. Boys and girls clubs were established with parents, volunteers, and extension agents providing leadership.

Since it’s inception, 4-H youth development programs has emphasized education, "learning by doing" and helping young people develop the skills they need to function in their community. While 4-H started as an agricultural learning resource, it has grown to address the changing need and diverse backgrounds of today’s youth.

In fact, the 2003 statistics from the National 4-H Council show one-third of 4-H participants reside in cities or suburbs of cities over 50,000.

What do the H's stand for?

Head, Heart, Hands, and Health

Member's pledge:

"I pledge
My Head to clearer thinking,
My Heart to greater loyalty,
My Hands to larger service, and
My Health to better living,
for my club,
my community,
my country and my world."
What are the 4-H emblem, motto, and slogan?

A green four-leaf clover with a white "H" on each clover leaf is the 4-H emblem. Green and white are the colors. The 4-H motto is "TO MAKE THE BEST BETTER." The 4-H slogan is "Learn by Doing."

How does 4-H work?

4-H is a hands-on learning program with a variety of activities in community 4-H clubs, county-wide events, special emphasis clubs, school enrichment and school age care settings.

The 4-H program is administered by Cooperative Extension, and relies on the cooperative efforts of members, parents, families, volunteers and the community. Cooperative Extension is literally a local extension of the North Carolina’s land-grant universities – NC State and NC A&T State. Cooperative Extension offices are located in all 100 counties in North Carolina, and the Cherokee Reservation.

Who funds 4-H?

The North Carolina 4-H program is conducted by NC Cooperative Extension through NC State & NC A&T State Universities with funding from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the state of North Carolina, and local county government.

These funding sources cover professional positions to support local volunteers, curriculum development, and administrative costs. However, individual 4-H clubs receive no direct funding from government sources. Private donors and corporate supporters provide additional funds for specific project areas, youth recognition programs, volunteer development opportunities and other programs in their communities.

What does it cost?

4-H has no membership registration fee or required uniform. There may be minimal costs for project manuals and some 4-H activities or events. Some clubs have dues to help defray the costs of project materials and refreshments.

Why do young people like 4-H?

4-H provides a chance to learn new things, develop new skills, travel to new places, experience new situations, make new friends, and most importantly have lots of fun. Most importantly, they get to decide what they want to learn and how
What is a 4-H club?

A 4-H club is a group of five or more young people, guided by an adult leader. Members can elect officers and each member chooses one or more projects. Each club may explore a single subject or several subjects. 4-H members elect club officers, conduct their own business, work together on community service activities, meet new friends, and most important, have lots of fun!

What's expected of parents?

Children need parental encouragement to get them started in 4-H and to keep them involved in the program as they reach their teens. Parents can help by:

**Sharing**- provide encouragement and take an interest in 4-H projects and activities. Listen, look, and offer suggestions, but avoid the temptation to "take over" and do things. Children learn by their mistakes as well as successes.

**Preparing**- assist by helping children understand the value of doing projects, having duties in the club, and following through on responsibilities as expected by others.

**Being there**- Children gain more from 4-H by attending meetings regularly and getting involved in 4-H activities. Parents are welcome at meetings and are encouraged to stay, observe, and become volunteer leaders. However, remember that 4-H clubs are for the youth.

**Caring**- arrange to participate whenever possible. Parents' presence shows the child that what he or she is doing is very important.

What else can a 4-H member do outside of the local club?

4-H members can participate in a variety of county and state activities depending on their age and ability.

**County Workshops & Events** – Members are encouraged to attend learning sessions scheduled throughout the year.

**County Events** – Fun and competitive events like Public Speaking, Presentations, Fashion Revue, 4-H Entertains and others are offered annually. Many of these events earn trips to District, State and even National events.

**4-H Teen Council** – Teens age 13 & up meet monthly to help plan county 4-H events, gain leadership skills, and plan community service projects they complete as a group. The County, District and State Councils elect officers annually.

**District and State Events** – Teen Retreats, NC State 4-H Congress, District Activity Days, State Council Conferences.
**National Recognition Trips** – Teens can qualify for special trips to National 4-H Congress, National 4-H Conference, and other National events in Atlanta, Washington, D.C., and other exciting cities.

**Whatever They Decide** – The possibilities are endless. Different areas of interest lead to opportunities that can’t be listed on the page.