



What is 4-H?

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4-H is the youth development program of Rutgers Cooperative Extension and the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station. As a 4-H volunteer and part of the county volunteer Extension staff, you represent Rutgers University. The county 4-H agent is a Rutgers faculty member, and the program associate is a Rutgers staff member. Some counties have paid staff called program assistants.

The 4-H Mission

The Rutgers Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development program uses a learn-by-doing approach to enable youth to develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need to become competent, caring, and contributing citizens of the world. This mission is accomplished by using the knowledge and resources of the land grant university system, along with the involvement of caring adults.

4-H Essential Elements

4-H members have the opportunity to experience four essential elements that promote positive youth development:

- Independence
- Mastery of skills
- Sense of belonging
- Generosity

In addition, the Targeting Life Skills model represents a variety of life skills gained through 4-H experiences, whether that be learning through 4-H projects, participating in a 4-H club meeting, taking part in a community service project, or giving a public presentation. See Life Skills in the 4-H Program for more information.

4-H Emblem

The emblem is a four-leaf clover with a capital H in each leaf, standing for Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. Use of the 4-H name and emblem is regulated by federal statute. National 4-H Headquarters (USDA), the Extension Director, and the State 4-H office can authorize use of the 4-H name and emblem. A club must obtain a 4-H charter in order to use the name and emblem. Contact the county 4-H staff for assistance with the charter application.





4-H Pledge

4-H members recite this pledge at each meeting or event:

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.

4-H Motto

The 4-H motto is: To Make the Best Better.

Volunteers

4-H has a responsibility to provide a safe and healthy environment for youth. All 4-H volunteers are appointed by the county 4-H agent after completing a screening process (see Becoming a 4-H Volunteer Leader). All potential volunteers complete a New Jersey 4-H Volunteer Application, which includes a request for references. All volunteers then participate in an orientation. When all requirements are satisfied, volunteers complete the 4-H Volunteer Registration Form and the 4-H Volunteer Appointment Agreement. The county 4-H staff conducts an interview or “volunteer review” with each volunteer following the first year of service and every fifth year of service thereafter.

You can serve as an adult volunteer (minimum age: 18 years) in several ways:

- Club leader
- Resource person
- Judge
- Member of an advisory group
- Key leader for a project area or special event

Policy of Inclusion

4-H Youth Development programs are offered to all youth, grades K-13, on a grade appropriate basis, without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. All possible efforts will be made to include rather than exclude youth in events conducted by the 4-H Youth Development Program.

Club Membership

K to 3rd graders participate in 4-H Cloverbud clubs, an exploratory program designed to help young people explore various project activities in a noncompetitive environment. 4th to 13th graders may belong to a standard 4-H club. For more information on the purpose and structure of a club, see How to Start a 4-H Club.



Clubs & Groups

4-H reaches youth through a variety of methods:

- Chartered 4-H clubs
- 4-H school enrichment programs
- 4-H special interest/short term programs/day camps
- 4-H after school education programs
- 4-H overnight camping programs
- 4-H independent projects
- 4-H instructional TV/video programs

For more information on any of these, see *There's More to 4-H Than Clubs: 7 Ways 4-H Reaches Youth*.

Fees

There are no county, state, or national dues or membership fees. However, club members may decide to collect money from members to cover the costs of club activities. They may also vote to collect dues to cover minor costs. In order for a 4-H club to collect money for any reason, it must follow all the 4-H policies regarding treasuries and fundraising, as well as any relevant state and federal tax regulations. See *4-H Club Treasuries and Guidelines for 4-H Fundraising*.

Uniforms

Uniforms are not required for membership in 4-H or for participation in 4-H activities. Fairs and shows may require livestock exhibitors to wear special clothing. Check with your county 4-H staff.

Club Policies

All clubs are required to submit standard by-laws to the county 4-H office in order to obtain the required club charter. See *Establishing 4-H Club By-Laws*.

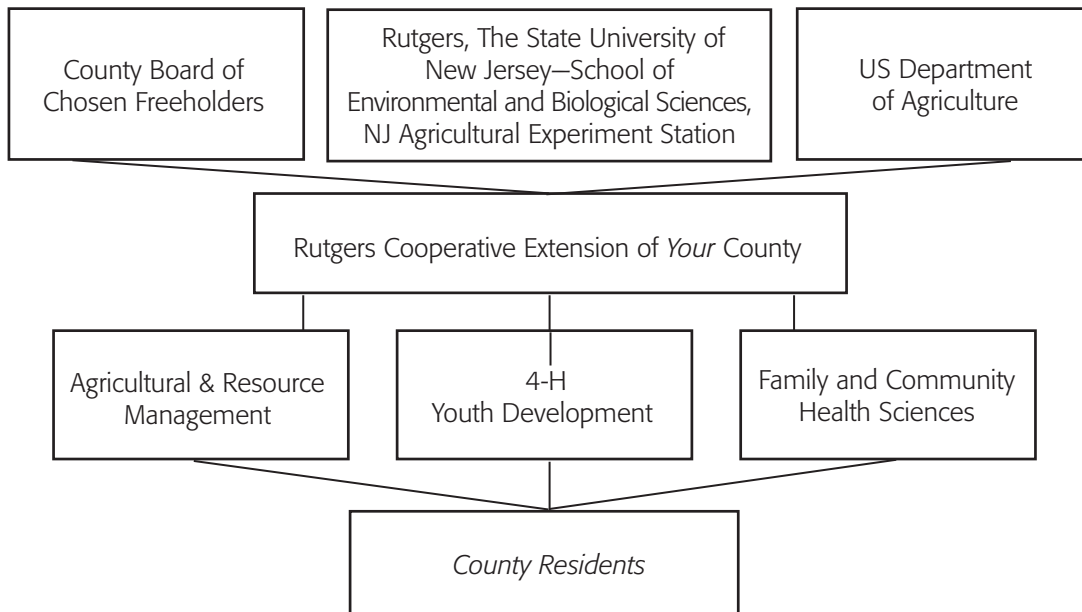
Educational Materials

A catalogue of approved 4-H curriculum is available from the county 4-H office. There are also resources on line at the state and national 4-H websites. Contact the county 4-H staff to review curriculum copies and discuss age appropriate activities.



How is 4-H Connected with the University?

In 1914, Congress passed the Smith-Lever Act that created the Cooperative Extension Service. The purpose of the act was to enable the land-grant university to extend research and practical education to people where they live. New Jersey's land-grant institution is Rutgers University. Funding for Rutgers Cooperative Extension is provided by federal, state, and county governments. Special programs may receive private funding.



The New Jersey Department of 4-H Youth Development encourages the teamwork of faculty, staff, and volunteers as we offer youth and adults high-quality personal growth opportunities. Faculty and staff concentrate on involving volunteers as stakeholders in 4-H at all levels and educating the public about 4-H Youth Development. Volunteers, as full partners in 4-H, contribute their unique talents, skills, and knowledge of our communities to provide personalized leadership with youth and adults.

*Revised by Gloria Kraft and Ginny Powell.
Written by Ginny Powell.*

References

National 4-H Headquarters website – www.national4-hheadquarters.gov

For more information on New Jersey 4-H, please visit www.nj4h.rutgers.edu.

Cooperating Agencies: Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and County Boards of Chosen Freeholders. Rutgers Cooperative Extension, a unit of the Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, is an equal opportunity program provider and employer.