

# Washington State 4-H Youth Development Program Policy

## INTRODUCTION

4-H is the youth development program of Washington State University Extension. As the largest youth development organization in Washington, 4-H reaches nearly 60,000 young people. The 4-H Youth Development Program helps young people and adults put knowledge to work in all of Washington's 39 counties, cities, and towns.

4-H teaches life skills that lead young people to become self-directing, positive, contributing members of our society. These life skills include positive self-esteem, effective communication, a sense of responsibility to oneself and one's community, sound decision making, and a strong sense of belonging. These skills give young people the tools necessary for successful adulthood. The 4-H mission is reached through a number of delivery methods that relate to the total concept of youth development.

The 4-H Youth Development Program is made possible through a cooperative partnership between federal, state, tribal, and local governments, Washington State University, the United States Department of Agriculture, professional staff, volunteers, and youth.

This statement of program policy clarifies roles and constitutes a working agreement for youth development. The following policies are in effect for all persons associated with the Washington State University Extension 4-H Youth Development Program. 4-H is the administrative responsibility of Extension's State Program Director for 4-H Youth Development. A county may have policies more restrictive than the state policies, but not less restrictive. The Program Director should be notified of any policies which differ from the state policies and may disapprove the policy if, at the Program Director's discretion, the policy does not positively advance the mission, philosophy, or goals of the 4-H Youth Development Program or is contrary to law. A request to waive state policy must be directed to the State Program Director. Any policy at the state or local level must be consistent with law to remain effective.

Washington State 4-H members, parents and families, professionals, and volunteers are expected

to conduct themselves in a courteous, ethical, and respectful manner, and provide a positive role model for others. All are expected to respect, adhere to, and consistently enforce the rules, policies, and guidelines established by their individual county's 4-H program, the Washington State 4-H Youth Development Program, and Washington State University Extension.

The consumption of alcohol, marijuana, or illegal drugs by youth or adults (volunteers and parents) is inconsistent with positive youth development. Therefore, alcohol and marijuana cannot be consumed at any 4-H event where youth are present.

Youth, parents, volunteers, professionals, and other adults will exercise ethical decision making based on the agreed upon values of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship.

Discrimination in the 4-H Youth Development Program because of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, disability, or sexual orientation is contrary to law and to the purposes and policies of Extension, WSU, and the USDA. Washington State University policies against discrimination apply to the 4-H Youth Development Program. WSU Extension 4-H Youth Development has a responsibility, when requested, to make reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities and ensure that its programs do not discriminate. WSU shares responsibility in this effort with county, state, tribal, federal, and private partners.

## MEMBERSHIP

1. Membership in 4-H is open to youth in kindergarten who have reached their 5th birthday (before January 1 of the current 4-H year), through those in the 12th grade or who have not reached their 19th birthday (before January 1 of the current 4-H year). Special Education youth, older than 19, may enroll with the approval of the County 4-H Educator.
2. The following groups are identified for special programs and activity participation, including all competitive events/activities, within the 4-H Youth Development Program:

Primary: K–2nd grades  
 Junior: 3rd–5th grades  
 Intermediate: 6th–8th grades  
 Senior: 9th–12th grades

A 4-H participant's "4-H Grade" shall be determined as follows:

a. In-School Youth

The "4-H Grade" for youth who are enrolled in schools that assign grade levels to students will be the same grade in which they are currently enrolled in school. (Note: The member's "4-H Grade" remains the same throughout the summer until October 1.) This is the most common determination for grade level among 4-H youth.

b. Non-Grade, Home-School, or Out-of-School Youth

Youth who are enrolled in schools that do not assign grade levels, youth who are home-schooled, or youth who are not enrolled in school shall be assigned a "4-H Grade" based upon the following "Age to Grade Conversion Chart." The "4-H Grade" will be determined based upon the participant's age on January 1 of the current 4-H year (October 1 through September 30). It will automatically advance one year on October 1.

Age to Grade Conversion Chart for Non-Graded, Home-Schooled and Out-of-School Youth	
Age on January 1	"4-H Grade" from September 1 through August 31
5	K
6	1
7	2
8	3
9	4
10	5
11	6
12	7
13	8
14	9
15	10
16	11
17	12
18	13 (One year out of High School)

3. Members must be in the 3rd grade and have reached their 8th birthday before January 1 of the current 4-H year to be eligible for:

- Competitive situations, including livestock shows or sales.
- Enrollment in large animal projects including beef, dairy, goat, equine, sheep, llama, and swine.
- Enrollment in shooting sports projects.
- Enrollment in projects using motorized vehicles.
- Enrollment in food preservation projects.

4. Cross-age competitive events are not allowed.

5. Primary 4-H members may participate in age-appropriate activities and projects. Projects recommended for Primary youth include: Dog, Cat, Poultry, Rabbit, Pygmy or Miniature Goat, Horseless Horse, Cavy, Exploring the World of Small Animals, Creative Arts, Performing Arts, Aerospace, Bicycle, Computer, Photography, Clothing, Just Outside the Door, and Exploring 4-H.

Primary 4-H members may not participate in competitive activities.

6. Marriage and/or parenthood are not barriers to 4-H membership, provided other membership requirements are met.

7. The county of residence is the primary county for 4-H enrollment. Youth are encouraged to enroll in their home county. A 4-H member cannot be enrolled in the same project in two different counties at the same time. Bordering counties may determine local guidelines for cross-county enrollment, with notification to the State 4-H Program Director.

8. 4-H members transferring from one county to another are accepted by that county and given full credit for their past 4-H work or achievements.

9. Individual 4-H members must be enrolled through the County Extension Office and the Washington State 4-H Office in order to participate in functions.

10. Funds may be collected to cover the cost of supplies and materials or user, conference, and event fees. Counties may charge a voluntary, nominal

fee for program operation. Collecting this fee must not be a barrier to membership enrollment.

11. Persons with disabilities have the right to request and receive reasonable accommodation. Each youth and event must be evaluated individually, assessing whether the youth is qualified for the event and whether he or she would be able to participate in the event with or without accommodation. As long as the youth meets essential requirements of the activity, participation is welcomed.

## ORGANIZATION

1. 4-H delivery modes include:
  - a. **Organized 4-H Club**—an organized group of youth, led by an adult, with a planned program that is carried on throughout all or most of the year. 4-H clubs may meet in any location and typically have elected officers and a set of rules approved by the membership to govern the club.
    - i. *Community clubs* typically meet in the evenings or on weekends and offer self-chosen multiple learning experiences and activities.
    - ii. *In-school clubs* meet during school hours and have officers and planned activities beyond school enrichment.
    - iii. *4-H after-school clubs* are organized within child care settings and include officers and planned activities.
    - iv. *Military 4-H clubs* are organized by the Armed Forces, often on military installations, and principally for military dependents.
  - b. **Special Interest/Short-Term Programs**—a group of youth meeting for a specific learning experience that involves direct teaching by Extension staff or trained volunteers, including teachers. The program is not part of school curriculum.
  - c. **4-H Camping**—youth taking part in an Extension-planned educational experience of group living in the out-of-doors.
    - i. *Overnight camping* includes being away from home at least one night (resident, primitive, or travel camping).
    - ii. *Day camping* consists of multiple-day programs, with youth returning home each evening.
  - d. **School Enrichment**—groups of youth receiving a sequence of learning experiences in cooperation with school officials during

school hours to support the school curriculum. Direct teaching is done by Extension staff or trained volunteers, including teachers.

- e. **Individual Study/Mentoring/Family Learning**—planned learning that occurs independently of a formal group setting as an individual, paired, or family learning effort. Examples include self-study, home study courses, advanced placement courses, mentoring or shadowing with an “expert,” and families learning together.
  - f. **School-Aged Child Care Education**—educational programs offered to youth outside of school hours, usually in a school or other community center and incorporating 4-H curricula. The primary purpose is to provide care for youth while parents are working or unavailable.
  - g. **Instructional TV/Video**—learning experiences through Extension via broadcast, TV, satellite, or videotape replays of such series.
2. 4-H enrollment constitutes a minimum of six hours of contact throughout the 4-H year.
  3. The 4-H program year is October 1 through September 30.
  4. **Funds:** The State 4-H Program Director has the sole discretion to determine whether a procedure, use, or activity related to funds raised, held, or expended using the 4-H emblem is consistent with the 4-H mission and policies. Funds raised by a 4-H club or group must be carefully accounted for and used only to directly support the 4-H program as outlined in C1059E, Leader's Guide to Handling Funds in the 4-H Youth Development Program. Annual audits are due December 31 to the County Extension Office. Additional audits can be required at any time by WSU Extension.

If raffles or bingo-type games are used to raise money, follow the guidelines for conducting these activities issued by the State Gambling Commission. Copies are available at the County Extension Office or online at <http://www.wsgc.wa.gov/>.

County Extension offices, in cooperation with the State 4-H Program Director, are responsible for all funds generated using the 4-H name and emblem. WSU Extension 4-H youth educators or WSU Extension County directors must have signature authority for oversight on all centralized 4-H accounts beyond individual club/unit levels, such as 4-H Leaders Councils, individually-held project group accounts, ect. Funds raised

and properties acquired in the name of 4-H must continue to be used for that purpose even if the original 4-H unit is disbanded. Funds cannot be divided among group members for personal gain. If a 4-H unit is disbanded, the State 4-H Program Director must approve the dispersal of the unit's funds and assets. Acceptable dispersal of funds and assets may include transferring the funds or assets to the County 4-H central leadership body, to other units which do similar functions or activities, or to the county Extension program.

5. The Washington State 4-H Foundation is a private foundation created expressly to raise funds to support 4-H programs throughout Washington State. Therefore, the Washington 4-H Foundation is the authorized fund development arm of the 4-H program.

## VOLUNTEER STAFF

1. Volunteer staff includes adults and youths in leadership and support roles.
2. 4-H members can provide volunteer leadership through the 4-H Leadership Project and by enrolling as a Youth Leader.
3. An adult volunteer must be at least 18 years old and not enrolled as a 4-H member.
4. Potential 4-H volunteers apply by completing the WSU 4-H Volunteer Application Forms. These forms include information to facilitate a background screening of the applicant. The State Program Director reserves the right to reject any applicant. Volunteers serve at the pleasure of the University and an applicant may be rejected without cause.
5. WSU Extension Child Protection and Child Abuse Prevention Volunteer Application and Procedures:
  - a. All new Extension volunteers who work with youth, including host family members and chaperones, will be screened. Rescreening may be conducted at any time.
  - b. Volunteers are expected to be familiar with C1001, *Child Abuse: Information for Washington State University Extension Faculty, Staff & Volunteers*, and with disclosure and reporting procedures.
6. Working with youth in the WSU Extension 4-H Youth Development Program is a privilege. Volunteers are to be positive role models.

Volunteers must sign, and are expected to abide by, the behavioral guidelines in C1000, *A Valuable Partnership*. Volunteers serve at the pleasure of the University and may be dismissed at any time without cause.

7. All new leaders must complete appropriate training during their first year based on the interactive online "E-Learning for 4-H Volunteers" and the Volunteer Training Modules (VTM). Counties may require project training or other types of training in addition to this state minimum.
8. The State 4-H Youth Program is a dynamic and ever-evolving program. The University may change an assignment, change leadership structure, discontinue a camp, or discontinue a project at any time in its efforts to improve the program.
9. Potential categories of 4-H adult volunteers include:

### **Local Leadership**

- General/Organizational Leader—assumes primary responsibility for a club/group.
- Project Leader—leads a specific project or curriculum within a club/group.
- Activity Leader—gives leadership to an event or activity within a club or short-term group.
- Resource Leader—serves as a source of expertise, an advisor, or in another resource capacity to a club/group.

### **County or Area Leadership (Middle Management)**

- 4-H Service Leader—works with other 4-H leaders in an area or county to promote 4-H, helps new clubs get started, and recruits, and trains new leaders.
  - 4-H County Program Leader—works with other 4-H leaders in an area or county to help with a specific project or activity.
10. Volunteer Liability. All 4-H leaders must individually enroll through the County Extension Office and the Washington State 4-H Office in order for WSU to assume responsibility for liability protection for adult volunteers.

Adult volunteer leaders are protected under the state of Washington tort claims law, RCW 4.92.060. An authorized volunteer 4-H leader can request the University defend him or her if an action or proceedings for damages are

brought which arise from their acts or omissions while performing, or in good faith purporting to perform, their official volunteer duties.

Adult volunteers are expected to act in good faith and without negligence in the performance of their duties in order to minimize any chance of creating a university liability.

Volunteer leaders may participate in the Department of Labor and Industries medical aid program. Participation allows an injured volunteer's medical expenses to be paid by the Department of Labor and Industries.

The coverage described previously does not apply to leaders who are group-enrolled.

11. Animal Disease Diagnosis and Treatment. 4-H volunteers, as representatives of Washington State University, are expected to act within the policies and guidelines of the 4-H Youth Development Program. A 4-H animal science volunteer may educate members and their families in the normal course of their 4-H activities in the areas of animal care, production, and management. WSU volunteers are not to engage in activities that include the diagnosis or treatment of, or the direct administration of, medications to project animals without authorization from a licensed veterinarian. A 4-H volunteer may exercise commonly acceptable first aid skills/practices in emergency situations.
12. Leaders in 4-H Shooting Sports projects must complete the 4-H State Shooting Sports Instructor Training. In Shooting Sports projects, lead instructors must be a minimum of 21 years old; assistant instructors must be at least 18 years old; teen leaders must be at least 14 years old.

## ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

1. Activities and events are open to all youth who meet the eligibility requirement for a specific event or activity.
2. A chaperone is someone who will have independent supervision of a 4-H youth/member overnight. For state events, chaperones must be 21 years of age. For regional or national events, chaperones must be at least 25 years of age. All chaperones must be enrolled 4-H volunteers who have successfully completed the screening process. The expected adult to youth ratio is 1:10.

3. Showmanship is a required educational activity for each species of animal shown in 4-H classes at community fairs, county fairs, State 4-H Fair qualifying events, youth shows, and the State 4-H Fair. Showmanship must be a part of each 4-H member's annual experience.

## ANIMAL MANAGEMENT AND OWNERSHIP

1. When participating in the Washington State 4-H Youth Development Program individuals must provide humane treatment and care to animals. Cruel or negligent treatment and handling will not be tolerated.

The use of illegal drugs and/or the improper use of animal health products or foreign substances will not be tolerated in the Washington State 4-H Youth Development Program. Extension personnel, 4-H volunteers, families, youth, and fair/show officials have a legal and moral obligation not to misuse these products. We have the responsibility to tell others not to use these substances and report those who do use any illegal substance. The administration of any drug or medication which could affect an animal's disposition or performance, resulting in an unfair advantage, is unacceptable. Additionally, there are federal penalties for using illegal substances in animals that are going into the nation's food supply.

2. 4-H members in Washington State need not own their 4-H project animals. Members may lease a market animal if it is not to be sold at a junior livestock auction.
3. Two 4-H members may jointly care for and show one animal. These two 4-H members may not compete in the same class or lot at an event.
4. Animals must be under the 4-H member's regular care and management for the following periods of time prior to the official county exhibit activity, including junior livestock shows:
  - Equine—90 days
  - Market Beef—120 days
  - Breeding Beef—90 days
  - Llama—90 days
  - Dairy (except Dairy Heifer Replacement)—90 days
  - Dairy Heifer Replacement—60 days
  - Goat—60 days
  - Sheep and Swine (Breeding and Market)—60 days

Cats—60 days  
Cavies—45 days  
Dogs—60 days  
Rabbits and Poultry—45 days

Animals raised by the 4-H member from birth or hatching are exempt from the minimum time periods.

5. Showing horned animals:
  - a. Market steers must be polled or dehorned; healed or re-growth must not extend more than two inches from the hairline. Horned breeding animals must have the horn tips covered as a safety precaution.
  - b. Horned, non-dairy goats or sheep may be exhibited in 4-H showmanship classes where animals are not exchanged between youth in the show ring. For a horned animal to be exhibited it must have its horn tips covered. If the sheep or non-dairy goat has scurs (horn re-growth), these scurs cannot exceed 1" in length without the horn tips being covered. Non-dairy horned goats and sheep may be shown in market and breeding classes but they must have horn tips covered as a safety precaution. A county may implement a more restrictive policy but not a less restrictive policy regarding the exhibition of horned sheep and goats.
  - c. No dairy animals with horns are permitted except in the Junior Heifer Calf class. The definition of horns includes "scurs," "nubbing," or "stubs" that extend more than one inch beyond the skin.
  - d. No horned dairy goat animals are allowed.

6. 4-H youth may exhibit unaltered male breeding animals of the following ages:

Beef Bulls—born in the current 4-H year (Oct. 1 to Sept. 30)

Rams—under 24 months

Swine Boars—under 6 months

Buck Goats—under 6 months

Yearling Equines—under 12 months

Llamas/Alpacas—under 24 months

7. Bison and Bison-blooded Animals: The bison is not a domesticated animal and must be treated with caution and respect. Each animal has its own distinct personality, each animal is unpredictable, and only a professional wildlife trainer should attempt to train a bison. Therefore, bison and bison hybrids exceeding  $\frac{3}{8}$  bison

breeding may not be used as project animals in Washington State 4-H. Only registered beefalo that have no more than  $\frac{3}{8}$  (37.5%) bison breeding and are registered in the American Beefalo Association (ABA) may participate in Washington State 4-H livestock fairs and shows in breeding and market classes.

## SAFETY

1. Equestrian Helmets. All Washington 4-H members and non-member youth participating in all equine projects and activities must wear American Society of Testing Materials (ASTM) and Safety Engineering Institute (SEI) approved headgear when riding or driving. The headgear must have a chin strap and be properly fitted. Additionally, all equestrians (including adults) are strongly encouraged to wear protective headgear at all times when riding or working around horses.
2. Rodeo Project. The 4-H Rodeo Project is a skill building project. The Washington State University Extension 4-H Program encourages youth to learn and develop their roping and riding skills as outlined in EM4637, *4-H Rodeo Project*. However, because of safety issues, the Washington 4-H Program, its faculty, staff, volunteers, or clubs will not sponsor or co-sponsor rodeo events.
3. Bicycle Helmets. All youth participating in 4-H bicycle activities must wear a properly fitted and secured helmet meeting ANSI Standard Z90.4.
4. Challenge. UIAA approved climbing helmets will be worn by all persons involved in or around high challenge course elements when participating on the course.

Climbing harnesses will be used on all high course elements.

Facilitators who lead challenge activities as part of the WSU 4-H program must have received WSU approved training.

5. 4-H Resident Camping. All 4-H resident camps will comply with the Washington State 4-H Resident Camp Standards, which can be found on the WA 4-H web page, <http://4h.wsu.edu> (search for Camp Standards), or by contacting the State 4-H Office.

## RELATIONSHIPS

1. Funds for awards may be accepted from donors on a local, county, district, and state basis, provided the support is offered without restrictive criteria and is consistent with the purposes of the 4-H Youth Development Program. Restrictive criteria include use of mandatory products, trade names, breed association requirements, etc.
2. Use of the 4-H name and emblem is governed by congressional action and supplemental administrative policy. Use of the 4-H name and emblem within a county is subject to approval by the County Extension Office. Use on a multi-county or state basis must be approved by the State 4-H Program Director. In all instances, such use shall conform to state and national policy and be for the furtherance of the 4-H educational program rather than for the benefits of private individuals, donors, or others.
3. 4-H/FFA. There is a Memorandum of Understanding between the WSU Extension 4-H Program and the Washington Future Farmers of America (FFA) program. Copies of the current Memorandum of Understanding are on file in all County Extension Offices and with each Vocational Agriculture instructor and FFA adviser in Washington. The document outlines the agreements in effect between 4-H and FFA pertaining to project or enterprise selection, judging team participation, exhibiting animals or other products at shows and fairs, and other cooperative efforts. The 4-H/FFA Memorandum of Understanding is an official policy statement of the Washington State University Extension 4-H Youth Development Program.
4. 4-H relationships with schools and other youth agencies:

The 4-H program may enter into cooperative programs with schools and other youth agencies where goals and objectives are compatible.

4-H curriculum used for such programming is purchased by the school or youth agency in accordance with current publication policy.

If a program is conducted jointly, the regulation governing the program should be mutually agreed upon.

Classroom projects that are not part of a 4-H Enrichment program are not eligible for

exhibition as 4-H project work.

5. Businesses are welcomed partners in the 4-H Youth Development Program. Businesses and 4-H volunteers need to consider the fiscal accessibility for youth at all economic levels when they partner with 4-H to provide educational opportunities.

A clear distinction needs to be made when businesses or individuals partner with 4-H groups/units/events as to whether the business or individual is functioning on a voluntary basis or as a paid expert. This distinction is based upon the differences between volunteer services and service for a fee.

- a. If a person is volunteering time and expertise to 4-H youth on an on-going basis during regularly scheduled meetings, then this person is functioning as a 4-H Club/unit volunteer and needs to be enrolled as such through the County Extension Office. (No fee is paid for those volunteer services.)
- b. If a person is volunteering time/expertise only occasionally at regular meetings and no fee is being paid for these volunteer services, then this individual may be enrolled as a resource leader with the County Extension Office. If the individual is not enrolled then they must be under the supervision of an enrolled 4-H volunteer at all times during 4-H activities.
- c. If a business person is offering to share expertise with youth and adults in a special, optional learning situation for a fee, including a reduced fee, then this person is acting as an independent contractor, not as a 4-H volunteer.

Business partners must provide full disclosure of all fees prior to providing a service to 4-H members in a 4-H setting. Occasionally a 4-H volunteer may move into an "independent contractor" role for a fee-based service. Examples include:

- i. an optional, in-depth clinic or workshop.
- ii. an educational activity conducted at a time other than at a 4-H group/unit meeting.
- iii. individual lessons or private professional consultations outside of the regular 4-H club/unit meeting. When functioning as an independent contractor, an individual, who is also an enrolled 4-H volunteer, is not covered by WSU liability or Labor and Industry medical coverage.



4-H 

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