




# 4-H Club Program Planning Guide



Good 4-H club programs don't just happen. A lot of planning comes first. A 4-H club program plan serves as a road map of the club's activities, helping to guide the club toward its goals. It is also the first step of *engaging youth in their own development and learning*.

In general, conducting a club program requires the following steps:

1. Defining the club's goals - Where are we going?
2. Planning steps toward these goals - How do we get there?
3. Sharing responsibilities toward goal accomplishment. - Who does what toward reaching these goals?
4. Carrying out these responsibilities - The actual program.
5. Evaluation - Did we get where we were going?



## The value of a Plan

The process of planning can be used to help the club define its goals more clearly and agree on steps to be taken toward these goals. Planning can allow for sharing the responsibilities for a successful club program among the members, parents, and leaders. A plan provides a basis for evaluation of a club's program by serving as a yardstick to which accomplishments can be compared.

Teens stay in 4-H in greater numbers than with many other youth organizations. One of the main reasons this is true is that in 4-H, young people are *involved in planning their programs and activities*. It is widely accepted as fact that people support and take part in activities they helped to develop. This process helps members feel that the club's program belongs to them.

By participating in the planning process, young people have a chance to *practice decision-making skills*. We help children gain experience in making wise choices by involving them in planning. They also will begin to *take responsibility* for their plans.



Early planning gives enough time before the activity to adequately prepared. If it is known in October that a resource person will be needed in January to speak to the club on bike safety, there will be plenty of time to find such a person and for that person to prepare.

Having an annual plan lets those involved plan for 4-H participation along with other family activities. It can reduce the number of times that a member has another activity in conflict with a 4-H activity.

A plan makes it easier to spread the responsibility of having a successful club among people. Each member can assume responsibility for a part of the plan by locating a speaker, presenting a demonstration on the topic of the meeting, bringing refreshments, making arrangements for a hike, or other tasks.

A potential member, donor, or parent helper can better see what your club is and how they can fit into what your club is doing, if you have a plan.

## Getting Member Input



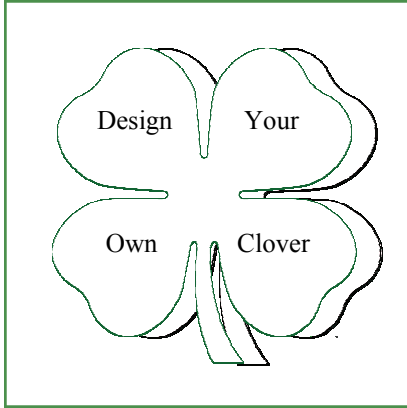
One of the key ingredients in creating a successful 4-H club program plan is getting input from the members. Some ways to get this input are discussed in this section. You may choose to use any one of these methods, a combination of these methods, or your own creation in getting member input for those developing the plan.

An on-going club might begin to gather information for a new plan by reviewing the past year 's program. New clubs must use other methods. The club as a whole or in small groups might discuss the following questions:

1. What did we do last year?
2. What did we like best about it?
3. Are there things about last year 's program that we want to be sure are in this year 's program?
4. What about last year 's program needs to be improved?

The answers to these questions can provide valuable insight to the planners.





A technique for getting member input used by leaders in several states is called **Design Your Own Clover**. To use this technique, you should give each member a sheet of paper with a large clover drawn on it, or four sets of index cards works. On each leaf of the clover, or card, should be written a phrase to be completed.

For instance the phrases might be

- ( a ) I would like to learn.....,
- ( b ) We could help our community by.....,
- ( c ) For fun we could ....
- ( d ) Some of the things I ' d like to do in my 4-H club this year are.....

Information gathered on this form can be used by the planners to find out what sorts of club programs, special activities, and community service-learning projects are wanted by club members.

**Brainstorming is** used in some clubs to come up with program ideas. Members call out program ideas as someone writes them down for everyone to see. The rules of brainstorming require that no comments or criticism of ideas be given until all the ideas are listed. After the list is formed, then the group discusses the ideas and selects those to be recommended to the planning group.

**A program suggestion box** is made available to members at each meeting by some clubs. Throughout the year members may add ideas for the next year ' s program. These suggestions may be given directly to the planning committee or reviewed by the club first.

**Group discussions** can be used and work for some leaders seeking member input in planning. The members are divided into small groups and each group is given the task of recommending three or four ideas for educational programs, community service-learning projects, and club special events. The club discusses the suggestions made by the groups and this information goes to the planning committee. Regardless of how you get the information it is very important to use member input in planning your club program.



## The Planning Committee



If you have a very small club your whole club may serve as the group that actually puts your plan together. Otherwise, the club might need a planning committee to serve this purpose.

The committee might be made up of members who volunteer to serve or members appointed by the club president. If an appointed committee is used, the president should be reminded of the benefit of having different ages, sexes, and project interests represented on the committee. Some clubs find it useful to invite several parents to meet with the planning committee. The committee seeks input from the members and develops a tentative plan that is brought back to the members for approval.



## Elements of the Completed Plan

Among the parts of a club's annual program for which planning should occur are:

- Club's annual goals
- Educational programs for each regular club meeting
- Club special events (i.e. parents' night, cookouts, camping trips)
- Involvement in activities beyond the club level.  
(Community service-learning, county and multi-county participation)

A number of different ways of recording the plan can be used, but one is included as an example. If possible each member should get a copy of the club goals and the club calendar. An additional aid for helping in planning is the "*4-H Club Planning Workbook*" (4H GCW 20). Ask your agent for a copies for each of your club members.



Here are examples of goals, calendars and meeting planning tools that are part of the *4-H Club Program Planning Workbook*.

**CLUB GOALS** (example)

1. Enroll 5 new members
2. Increase family participation
3. Have 100% of members complete at least one project record
4. Have 75% of members participate in one community service-learning project
5. Have at least 50% of members give at least one demonstration or illustrated talk.

**CLUB CALENDAR** (example)

MONTH	PROGRAM, EVENT OR ACTIVITY	DATE & TIME	PLACE	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
AUGUST				
SEPTEMBER				
OCTOBER				
NOVEMBER				
DECEMBER				
JANUARY				

Page 4

**CLUB MEETING PLANS** (example)

DATE:	PROGRAM TOPIC:
JOB:	PERSON RESPONSIBLE:
Business	
Arrange for meeting place	
Plan business agenda	
Lead pledge to American flag and 4-H Pledge	
Education	
Contact program presenter	
Introduce speaker or presenter	
Present Demonstration or Illustrated Talk	
Recreation	
Lead recreation	
Lead singing, icebreaker, or team-building activity	
Provide refreshments	

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Page 10

Look for these additional resources to assist you in your role as a 4-H Club Leader.



- |           |                                     |           |                        |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|-----------|------------------------|
| 4H GCL 00 | Starting and Maintaining A 4-H Club | 4H GCM 11 | 4-H Officers' Handbook |
| 4H GCW 20 | 4-H Club Program Planning Workbook  | 4H GCR 01 | 4-H Secretary Book     |
| 4H GCL 21 | 4-H Club Meetings                   | 4H GCR 02 | 4-H Treasurer Book     |



# Design Your Own Clover!

I Would Like to Learn...

We Could Help Our  
Community By...

For FUN we could...

Some of the things I would like  
to do in 4-H this year are...



## The 4-H Pledge

**HEAD**

*I pledge...*

**HEART**

*my Head*

*to clearer thinking*

**HANDS**

*my Heart*

*to greater loyalty*

**HEALTH**

*my Hands*

*to larger service*

*and my Health*

*to better living*



*for my club*

*my community*

*my country*

*and my world.*

The **HEAD** represents:

1. Thinking, planning and reasoning.
2. Gaining new and valuable knowledge.
3. Understanding the whys.

The **HEART** represents:

1. Being concerned about the welfare of others.
2. Accepting the responsibilities of citizenship.
3. Determining the values and attitudes by which to live.
4. Learning how to live and work with others.
5. Developing positive attitudes.

The **HANDS** represent:

1. Learning new skills.
2. Improving skills already known.
3. Being useful, helpful, and skillful.
4. Developing respect for work and pride in accomplishment.

The **HEALTH** represents:

1. Practicing healthful living.
2. Enjoying life.
3. Using leisure time wisely.
4. Protecting the well being of self and others.

The 4-H Pledge, first adopted in 1927, summarizes 4-H as the four-fold development of youth through the Head, Heart, Hands and Health.

Post a pledge banner at your meeting site. At the end of the first meeting, give everyone a card with the 4-H pledge to take home.

1. This document is 4H GCL 20, one of a series of the Florida 4-H Youth Development, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. November 2007. Please visit the 4-H Website at <http://florida4H.org>.
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