

North Dakota 4-H Policy and Procedure Handbook

NDSU Extension 4-H Youth Development Program

Mailing address:

NDSU Dept 7280, PO Box 6050 Fargo, North Dakota 58108-6050

Physical address:

NDSU Dept. 7280 1400 Centennial Blvd FLC Room 219 Fargo, North Dakota 58108

Phone: 701-231-7251

Email: NDSU.4-H@ndsu.edu Website: <u>www.ndsu.edu/4h</u>



EXTENSION



Table of Contents

1. 4-H Policy	10
1.1 4-H Policy	10
1.2 Approval of 4-H Policy	11
1.3 Supervision of 4-H Policy	11
1.4 County Policy and State Policy	11
1.5 Acknowledgment of Referenced State Policies	12
2. Organization and Administration	13
2.1 North Dakota 4-H Organizational Hierarchy and Communication Structure Chart	
2.2 North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program Leadership	14
2.3 4-H Council	16
2.4 4-H Club	16
2.5 State 4-H Office	18
3. 4-H iconography	20
3.1 North Dakota 4-H Mission Statement	20
3.2 National 4-H Authorized Policy	20
3.3 The 4-H Name	22
3.4 4-H Emblem	22
3.5 The 4-H Colors	22
4. 4-H Membership and Eligibility	23
4.1 4-H Year	
4.2 Age Requirements	
4.3 Enrollment	23
4.4 Special Circumstances	24
4.5 Cloverbud Program	27
4.6 Online Enrollment	27
5. Methods of 4-H Participation	29
5.1 Participating in Organized 4-H Clubs	
5.2 Participating in 4-H Programs Without Officers	
5.3 Recognizing Clubs' Achievements	
6. 4-H Club Structure	32
6.1 Club Definition	
6.2 Club Charter	
6.3 Club Memorandum of Understanding	
6.4 Club Standards	
6.5 Club Members	32
6.6 Club Operational Requirements	
6.7 4-H Club Constitution and Bylaws	
6.8 Club Name	
6.9 Club Finances	
6.10 Club Programs and Activities	

7. 4-H Council Structure	36
7.1 Essential Functions of a 4-H Council	36
7.2 4-H Council Membership Process	37
7.3 4-H Council Member Enrollment	37
7.4 4-H Council Fund Procurement, Storage and Dispersal	38
7.5 Council Resource Development Tips and Protocols	38
8. 4-H Youth Protection Policy	39
8.1 Youth Protection Policy	
8.2 Code of Conduct	
8.3 Supervision	
8.4 Adults Working One-on-One with Youth	40
8.5 Reporting Abuse or Neglect	
8.6 Anti-bullying	
8.7 Anti-hazing	40
8.8 Romantic Relationships	40
8.9 Physical Punishment	41
8.10 Nondiscrimination Policies	41
8.11 Alcohol and Illegal Drug Use	42
8.12 Institutional Support in Crisis	42
8.13 Electronic Messaging	42
8.14 Food Preparation and Serving	42
8.15 Incident Reporting	
8.16 Mandatory Reporting Guidance	
8.17 Motor Vehicles, Machinery and Equipment	
8.18 Ensuring a Safe Environment in the Presence of a Registered Sex Offende	
8.19 Health Forms	
8.20 Program-specific Safety Policy	48
9. 4-H Privacy Policy	49
9.1 Web Postings	49
9.2 Confidential Information	49
9.3 Media Releases	
9.4 Consent to Participate in Statewide Impact Studies	49
9.5 File Management	49
10. Media, Social Media and Messaging Use	50
10.1 Media Release Protocols	
10.2 Social Media Best Practices	
10.3 Messaging with Youth	
10.4 Further County Policy Development Considerations	
11. 4-H Volunteers	
11.1 Volunteers	
11.2 Volunteering for Less Than One Day	
11.3 Volunteer Recertification.	
11.4 Volunteer Orientation and Training Requirements	
11.5 Reporting Criminal Charges	
11.6 Personal Insurance	
11.7 Chaperones	
11.8 Discipline, Dismissal or Suspension of Volunteers	
	55

12. Accessibility	56
12.1 Youth with Disabilities and Nondiscrimination	
12.2 Inclusion	56
12.3 Educational Goals	56
12.4 Accommodations	56
12.5 Recommendations for Building Accessible and Inclusive Spaces	58
13. 4-H Projects	61
14. Animal Projects	61
14.1 Federal and State Requirements for Youth Working with Animals	
14.2 Youth Quality Assurance Policy Statement	
14.3 Handling and Care of Animals	62
14.4 Animal Ownership	62
14.5 Animal IDs	63
14.6 Animal Showmanship Expectations	65
14.7 Animal Biosecurity	66
14.8 Animal Injury, Illness and Substitution	67
14.9 Animal Qualification	67
15. Shooting Sports	69
16. 4-H Contests and Exhibits	69
16.1 4-H Event Rules and Regulations	69
16.2 North Dakota 4-H Contest and Exhibition Rules	
16.3 North Dakota 4-H Event Dress Codes	70
16.4 National 4-H Contest and Exhibition Rules	71
16.5 Deadlines in 4-H	72
16.6 Late Entries on the Day of an Event	72
16.7 Dropped Exhibits	72
16.8 Consequences for Missing Deadlines	72
16.9 State Consequences for Missing Deadlines	73
17. 4-H Special Events	74
17.1 Parades	74
17.2 Field Trip/Day Trip	77
17.3 Overnight Housing Policy	77
17.4 Emergency Preparedness	80
17.5 Water Events	80
17.6 Adopting a Highway and Cleanup Safety Procedures	82
17.7 Behavior Expectations and Accountability	84
18. Positive Youth Development	85
18.1 Positive Youth Development Foundational Pieces	
18.2 Equal Protection	
18.3 The 5 Steps of the Experiential Learning Model	86
18.4 Beyond Ready Preparation: Equipping a Ready Generation	90

19. 4-H Council and Clubs Finances and Taxes	91
19.1 Abiding by Local, State and Federal Tax Laws	91
19.2 Purpose and Acceptable Usage of Funds	91
19.3 Ownership of Funds	94
19.4 Fundraising	94
19.5 4-H Councils for Procuring, Storing and Dispersing Funds	95
19.6 Procedure for 4-H Clubs Procuring, Storing and Dispersing Funds	97
19.7 Filing Taxes	99
19.8 Monetary Assets	99
19.9 Recommended Audit Procedure	100
19.10 Enforcement of Policies	101
19.11 Concerns About a 4-H Group's Finances	101
19.12 Additional Resources	101
20. Youth Sales and Marketing Using the NDSU Extension Platform	103
20.1 Youth Entrepreneurship and 4-H	
20.2 Use of NDSU Extension Platforms for Sales	
20.3 Fundraising Exception	103
20.4 External Business Promotions	103
20.5 Sharing Nonprofit Educational Resources	103
21. 4-H Grant Application and Approval Policy	104
21.1 1. Eligibility to Apply	
21.2 2. Residency and Dual Enrollment	
21.3 3. Required Preapproval Process	
21.4 4. Deliverables and Accountability	
21.5 5. Extension Agent Involvement	
22. Adult Committees and Decision-making Expectations	
22.1 4-H Adult Committees	
22.2 Procedures and Expectations	
22.3 Accountability	
23. Grievances	
23.1 Definitions in Grievance Policy	
23.2 Scope of Grievance Policy	
23.3 Confidentiality of Grievances	
23.4 Retaliation Protection During Grievance Procedure	
23.5 County Grievance Policy	
Appendix Table of Contents	111

North Dakota 4-H Policy 🛆

The North Dakota 4-H Policy and Procedure Handbook is developed for North Dakota State University Extension and its 4-H Youth Development Program to provide a safe environment while cultivating essential life skills for the future generation of leaders. Its purpose is to set forth operating policies and procedures for the North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program. The 4-H Youth Development Program operates within the protocols, policies and procedures of North Dakota State University (NDSU), North Dakota State University Extension and the Department of Agricultural and Family Education (AFE). The University policies and procedures within this handbook are the controlling statutes regarding the University's jurisdiction over all aspects of the 4-H Youth Development Program in North Dakota.

Revisions to this handbook are established after careful review and analysis by the statewide 4-H Youth Development Program Policy Advisory Committee and stakeholders, including staff, volunteers and clientele. The statewide 4-H assistant director renders decisions on policy and procedure modifications in consultation with Extension administration, which includes the Extension Leadership Team.

Some policies and procedures of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) also apply. The North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program staff and 4-H volunteers use this handbook to ensure the educational and administrative integrity of all NDSU Extension 4-H Youth Development Program events and activities.

Handbook sections will be reviewed and revised on an annual basis.

North Dakota 4-H Rule **Change Proposal Protocols**

The North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program is committed to empowering young people to reach their full potential through valuable experiences to build and expand on life skills before adulthood. To continue improving the program, suggestions for rule changes that will enhance the impact on 4-H members, volunteers and communities served are invited.

The 4-H community — members, volunteers and their families — have been instrumental in shaping the North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program into what it is today. The ability to propose new rules or changes is vital for the community to contribute ideas and improvements supporting youth growth and development.

Who Can Propose a Rule Change?

Anyone involved with 4-H (such as members, parents, volunteers and caregivers and guardians of members) is invited to submit suggestions for rule changes. The North Dakota 4-H Policy Committee will review these suggestions.

Submission Process

- Eligibility: Proposals for changes can be submitted to the assistant director of 4-H Youth Development by March 31 of each year.
- Review Process: The North Dakota 4-H Policy Committee will review submissions and make edits by June 30.
- Implementation: Approved changes will take effect on Sept. 1, the beginning of the new 4-H year.

Instructions for Submitting a Rule Change Proposal

- 1. **Download the form:** Obtain the North Dakota 4-H Policy and Handbook proposal form.
- 2. **Define the problem:** Clearly outline the issue the proposal addresses. Seek input from youth and other stakeholders to brainstorm potential solutions.
- 3. Select the best solution: Choose the most appropriate solution that aligns with the mission and goals of the 4-H Youth Development Program.
- 4. Consider the impact on other rules: Identify any existing rules that would be affected by the proposal and specify the relevant sections and page numbers.
- 5. Submit the proposal: Provide clear and precise wording for the proposed rule change. If altering existing language, strike through the words to be removed and use bold and italics for new additions.

Approved revisions are posted on the North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program Google Drive. For the most current policy statement, refer to the handbook posted on the state 4-H Google Drive by clicking this link or scanning the below QR code:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1QMjjOSGxMyc3PQAjaHHhBq mlxTQW 3?usp=drive link



North Dakota 4-H **Google Drive**

New and revised policies will be distributed via email to the 4-H staff directly, as well as through e-newsletters and in monthly staff meetings.

The 4-H mission is to give young people access to opportunity. 4-H welcomes young people of all beliefs and backgrounds, and 4-H empowers them to positively change their lives and communities.

4-H began in 1902 and has since grown into the largest youth development program in the nation. 4-H prepares young people to be leaders in their community and around the world through hands-on experiences alongside their peers and other adults. Backed by a network of more than 6 million youth, 540,000 adult volunteers, 3,500 professionals and more than 60 million alums, 4-H delivers research-based programming around positive youth development.

4-H is delivered through America's 109 land-grant universities and the Cooperative Extension System (CES), reaching every corner of the nation. The CES also includes the territories of American Samoa, Guam, Micronesia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The CES is housed within the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), a federal agency housed within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). North Dakota 4-H partners include youth, volunteers, land-grant universities, state and local governments, the North Dakota 4-H Foundation and USDA/NIFA. In North Dakota, 4-H operates in all 53 counties through North Dakota State University Extension.

4-H influences youth from diverse backgrounds in all communities. 4-H is an opportunity for all communities — rural, suburban or urban. Adults engage in 4-H as volunteers, guest speakers or other roles to take advantage of professional development opportunities the 4-H program offers. Adults are involved as volunteers, chaperones, coaches or committee members, all working collaboratively to advise the framework for the 4-H Youth Development Program.

4-H programs are offered in local communities through after-school programs, in-school programs, camping settings, 4-H club experiences, workshops or clinic opportunities, hands-on webinars and more.

Key Partners

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

USDA provides leadership on food, agriculture, natural resources, rural development, nutrition and related issues based on public policy, the best available science and effective management.

National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)

NIFA is one of 29 agencies within the USDA and is the CES federal partner. NIFA administers federal funding to address the agricultural issues impacting people's daily lives and the nation's future. NIFA includes the Division of Youth and 4-H.

Cooperative Extension System (CES)

CES is a partner of NIFA that empowers farmers, ranchers and communities of all sizes to meet the challenges they face, adapt to changing technology, improve nutrition and food safety, prepare for and respond to emergencies and protect the environment.

National 4-H Council

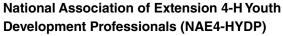
The National 4-H Council supports national and state 4-H programs with a focus on fundraising, brand management, communications and legal and fiduciary services.

Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP)

ECOP provides representative leadership and is the governing body of Cooperative Extension. Within ECOP, there is a 4-H Leadership Committee.

4-H Program Leaders' Working Group (PLWG)

The 4-H Program Leaders' Working Group (PLWG) is a collaborative forum that brings together key 4-H stakeholders — including state 4-H program leaders, representatives from 4-H national headquarters at USDA, National 4-H Council and other partners and public contributors. PLWG serves as a platform for inclusive, transparent and strategic dialogue to guide the future of 4-H. Through this shared leadership model, PLWG helps shape national direction, strengthen alignment and support the effective delivery of youth development programming across the country. It fosters communication, coordination, and collective decision-making among partners to ensure high-quality, research-based experiences for all youth.



NAE4-HYDP is an inclusive, diverse organization engaging youth development professionals by the following methods:

- Providing advanced professional development through a variety of delivery methods
- · Encouraging leadership development and mentoring across generations
- Cultivating networking to strengthen positive youth development programming globally
- · Integrating scholarship, research and practice

NAE4-HYDP has a state-level branch that anyone can join. Members gain access to the annual conference, connect with youth development professionals from around the world, share their work and discover resources created by others.

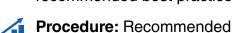
Legend



Policy: Not negotiable

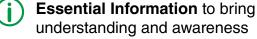


Guideline: Strongly recommended best practice





"Implementation Steps"





1. North Dakota 4-H Policy

4-H is authorized by the U.S. Congress. At the federal level, 4-H is the responsibility of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and its federal agency, the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA). The authority for the 4-H Youth Development Program is assigned to each state's land-grant university system through its Extension program. North Dakota State University is North Dakota's 1862 land-grant university. North Dakota also has five 1994 other land-grant universities established in 1994.

North Dakota State University (NDSU) is the 1862 landgrant university for North Dakota. NDSU Extension has a history in North Dakota dating back to 1914 when the Cooperative Extension Service was established through the federal Smith-Lever Act. Surveys indicate that North Dakota's first 4-H club, the Perry 4-H Club, was established in Cavalier County in 1922.

The USDA establishes regulations related to the use of the 4-H Name and Emblem. The North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program has the responsibility and authority to define what is and is not a 4-H educational program. It also authorizes counties to use the federally protected 4-H Name and Emblem as established in the 4-H Name and Emblem Use Handbook. It establishes statewide policy and accountability for the 53 NDSU Extension field offices where 4-H is conducted.

While 4-H is the core enrollment program, any youth reached through NDSU Extension's educational initiatives - whether through clubs, school enrichment programs, community programs, or other short-term experiences is recognized as a 4-H participant under USDA protocols. These diverse experiences are part of the broader 4-H youth development portfolio and contribute to the overall reach and impact of the program.

NDSU Extension

NDSU Extension is the facilitator of the North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program. NDSU Extension empowers North Dakotans to improve their lives and communities through science-based education. Extension works in all corners of the state, at Research Extension Centers and on the main campus of NDSU.

North Dakota 4-H Foundation

The North Dakota 4-H Foundation is a 501(c)3 organization that provides financial support to develop and promote programs for 4-H youth and adults. They also own the 4-H camp property in Washburn, North Dakota.

1.14-H Policy

4-H policy provides a consistent framework for the 4-H Youth Development Program in North Dakota. This 4-H Policy and Procedure Handbook guides the expectations for the management of the 4-H program.

4-H policy is created to ensure that 4-H programming is consistent, fair and legal. All Extension staff and volunteers representing NDSU Extension are responsible for reading, supporting and implementing the North Dakota 4-H policy. 4-H participants and families are responsible for following the policy.

1.1.1 Accountability to 4-H Policy

All NDSU Extension staff, volunteers and youth must adhere to these policies.

1.1.2 Failure to Follow 4-H Policy

Failure to follow policy could result in the loss of authorization to use the 4-H Name and Emblem, dismissal from a 4-H event or activity or dismissal from the 4-H program as deemed appropriate by NDSU Extension Administration.

1.2 Approval of 4-H Policy

4-H policy is supported by NDSU Extension Administration and is the official policy of the North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program. The original version of this document was reviewed and affirmed by a 4-H policy advisory group that represented each of the subcommittees of the NDSU Extension 4-H program planning team.

1.3 Supervision of 4-H Policy

All NDSU Extension employees share responsibility for being familiar with, upholding and enforcing the North Dakota 4-H Policy and Procedure Handbook. The designated 4-H contact is specifically accountable for ensuring the consistent implementation of this policy within their county. All staff must actively support the integrity of 4-H programming by aligning their work with the established policies and procedures.

The district director designates an agent to serve as the 4-H contact for each Extension county and tribal office.

In situations requiring a decision — such as weatherrelated cancellations or program concerns — the 4-H contact is responsible for making the final determination. While they are encouraged to consult with stakeholders. establish a grievance committee if needed and collaborate with others, the ultimate responsibility for communicating and standing by the final decision rests with the 4-H contact.

1.3.1 Management Procedures

The 4-H contact may designate another Extension staff member or an Extension volunteer to be responsible for parts of the implementation of this policy. The 4-H contact (or designee) is responsible for ensuring the following:

- A. All appropriate forms are provided to all individuals affected by this policy.
- B. Appropriate processes are followed.
- C. Educational resources and training are provided to volunteers/staff.
- D. 4-H contact (or designee) is available to listen and take action as appropriate.
- E. Files and confidential information are secure and managed appropriately.

1.4 County Policy and State Policy

All NDSU Extension staff and volunteers representing North Dakota 4-H are responsible for supporting and implementing North Dakota 4-H Policy. 4-H participants and families are responsible for following the policy.

Policies of the local 4-H program will not contradict, violate or supersede the policies of NDSU Extension or National 4-H.

When developing policies (such as local county bylaws or 4-H club rules), it is strongly recommended to consider potential barriers preventing families from an inclusive environment. For example, if a 4-H club sets a required rule that a 4-H member must attend six meetings, ensure that at least twice the number of required meetings are held to provide ample opportunities for families to meet this demand. Work with families to ensure their youth have the chance to participate in some capacity. Talent is everywhere; opportunity is not.

The following questions will determine if county policies are consistent with the North Dakota State University policies, National 4-H policies and State 4-H policies:

- Does the policy align with state and national 4-H policies?
- Does the policy support equity and avoid discriminating against a 4-H member or volunteer?
- Does the policy promote belonging and inclusivity for all?
- Does the policy keep youth and their voice first?
- Does the policy reflect the values of 4-H as the nation's premier youth development organization?
- Are there any unique or exceptional circumstances this policy needs to address?
- · Looking ahead: What positive impact will this policy have in five to 10 years?

1.5 Acknowledgment of Referenced State Policies

This policy has been crafted with careful consideration and integration of exemplary practices from several states' policies. The significant contributions of these states, whose established protocols have provided valuable insights and frameworks, are hereby acknowledged as having informed and shaped the policy development.

State universities whose policies have inspired this document include the following:

- Kansas State University Research and Extension: Kansas 4-H Policy Handbook
- University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources 4-H Youth Development Program Policy Handbook
- University of Minnesota Extension 4-H Policies
- Michigan State University Extension 4-H
- Ohio State University Extension: Ohio 4-H Youth Development

Sincere gratitude is extended to these states for their work and dedication to excellence, which have been instrumental in guiding efforts to develop robust and effective regulations.

Review Committee (2023-2025)

West District

Kurt Froelich, Extension agent — Stark-Billings County, Agriculture and Natural Resources

Kelly Leo, Extension agent — Williams County, Agriculture and Natural Resources

Ashley Ueckert, Extension agent — Golden Valley County, Agriculture and Natural Resources

Lynnette Vachal, Extension agent — Mountrail County, 4-H Youth Development

Central District

Karla Meikle. State 4-H Activities Coordinator

Dena Kemmet, Extension Central District Director

Dustin Hammond, Extension agent — Logan and McIntosh Counties, Family and Community Wellness

Torie Piehl, LaMoure County Administrative Assistant and 4-H Program Assistant

Sara Clemens, State 4-H Youth Development Specialist, Outdoor Education and Shooting Sports

East District

Brian Zimprich, Extension agent — Ransom County, Agriculture and Natural Resources

MaKayla Fleming, Extension agent — Grand Forks County, 4-H Youth Development

Jill Murphy, Extension agent — Traill County, Agriculture and Natural Resources

Susan Milender, Extension agent — Barnes County, Family and Community Wellness

State 4-H Office

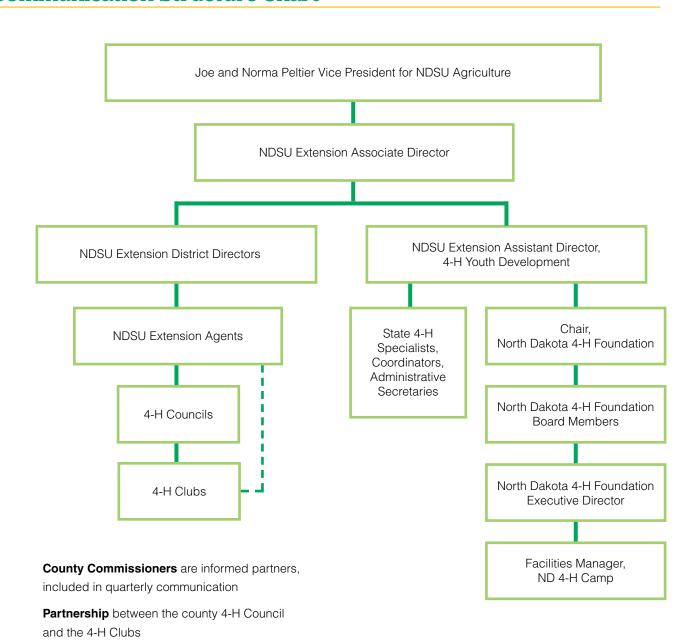
Samantha Lahman, State 4-H Youth Development Specialist, Animal Science

Meagan Hoffman, State 4-H Youth Development Specialist Leigh Ann Skurupey, Extension Assistant Director, 4-H Youth Development

2. Organization and Administration \(\Delta \)

This section outlines the North Dakota 4-H organizational chart, communication hierarchy and the diverse contributions that make NDSU Extension's 4-H Youth Development Program a leader in positive youth development.

2.1 North Dakota 4-H Organizational Hierarchy and Communication Structure Chart



Leadership for the North Dakota 4-H program is provided by NDSU Extension staff, working cooperatively with their county personnel, parents, guardians and volunteer leaders. 4-H advisory committees, 4-H councils and other 4-H entities serve in an advisory capacity and provide feedback on the direction of 4-H program efforts within their communities. NDSU Extension holds the authority to establish and administer such groups as the land-grant university for North Dakota.

Local and county 4-H youth development programming and 4-H youth development volunteers are accountable to the NDSU Extension professionals responsible for the 4-H Youth Development Program.

4-H Youth Development councils/groups/clubs and volunteers operate under the guidance and control of the Cooperative Extension System in partnership with NIFA.

2.2 North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program Leadership

The NDSU Extension director, associate director and assistant director for 4-H Youth Development Program align priorities and the direction of the 4-H program with national and state 4-H priorities to advance the lives and livelihood of North Dakotans through research-based education. The state 4-H office administers needs assessments to address relevant social issues and concerns consistent with the research and staff available through NDSU Extension.

2.2.1 NDSU Extension District Director

The district director (DD) supervises the Extension agents in the counties and tribal Extension offices in their assigned district. The districts are West, North Central, Central and East.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Communication
 - Facilitates communication of 4-H program needs within their district.
- · Program stewardship
 - Ensures that NDSU Extension agents are effectively managing the local 4-H program.
- · Situational mitigation
 - Works with the 4-H contact and other Extension agents to address and resolve conflicts and behavior issues within the 4-H program.

- Support for Extension staff and offices
 - Provides coaching and advice for local Extension staff.
 - Works with the county commission to help ensure that the Extension office has adequate resources.

2.2.2 NDSU Extension Agent

NDSU Extension agents hold the primary authority over the local 4-H program in the county or tribal office to which they are assigned. Agents specialize in agriculture and natural resources (ANR), family and community wellness (FCW) or 4-H youth development, although all agents are required to work with the 4-H youth development program, regardless of the program area title.

Roles and Responsibilities

- · Leadership and program management
 - Acts as the local NDSU Extension presence and serves as the primary authority over the 4-H program at the local level.
 - Leads the county or tribal 4-H program (in offices with more than one Extension agent, the agents serve in co-leadership roles).
 - Conducts the 4-H program in alignment with the national and state 4-H Youth Development Program's mission and vision.
- Educational programming
 - Offers 4-H educational programming and training to volunteers and youth based on identified needs.
 - Provides youth development programs and positive experiences through various platforms like clubs, after-school programs, in-school programs, camping, webinars and special-interest programs.
- · Participant and volunteer management
 - Ensures all 4-H participants are enrolled in 4-H
 Online for insurance coverage.
 - Maintains secure and confidential data of all 4-H participants.
 - Ensures all adult and teen 4-H volunteers undergo required volunteer screening procedures and are enrolled in 4-H Online.
- Policy and administration
 - Handles issues related to 4-H policy and administration, including disciplinary actions.
 - Observes 4-H programming to ensure compliance with 4-H and NDSU policies and federal regulations.
- Financial and activity records
 - Maintains financial records and supports tax guidance for the 4-H council and 4-H clubs.
 - Keeps records of 4-H club activities and reports club financial records to the state 4-H office.

- Alignment with Mission and Vision
 - Conducts the 4-H program in alignment with the national and state 4-H Youth Development program's mission and vision.
- Advisory role
 - Advises 4-H councils and clubs to maintain records of service-learning activities, camps, after-school programs and other experiential learning opportunities. Advises 4-H councils and clubs to maintain records of service-learning activities, camps, after-school programs and other experiential learning opportunities.

NOTE: It is not mandatory for an Extension agent to attend every 4-H council meeting, activity or 4-H club gathering. Empowering certified 4-H volunteers to assume leadership roles fosters professional development, growth and learning opportunities.

2.2.3 County 4-H Contact

The Extension district director assigns a 4-H contact for each county or tribal Extension office. This role may rotate among agents periodically in multi-agent offices, and the current 4-H contact for a county or tribal office will have a "4-H" identifier next to their name in the Extension directory.

The 4-H contact is the NDSU Extension agent who is considered the primary contact for the 4-H program at the local level, but is not solely responsible for the 4-H program.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Primary contact
 - Serves as the lead contact for initial connections and clarifies messages from state, district and local levels.
 - Signs documents and facilitates communication regarding 4-H communication about events, announcements and activities within the county.
- Shared responsibility
 - Shares responsibility for the 4-H program with all Extension agents in the county.
 - Collaborates with county peers to lead the 4-H Youth Development Program in compliance with NDSU Extension policies and federal and state laws.
- · Leadership and implementation
 - Provides leadership for planning, implementing and evaluating the local 4-H Youth Development Program.
 - Manages the flow of information from federal/ national and state entities responsible for the 4-H program.

- · Final decision
 - Serves as the primary decision-maker, whether related to weather, safety or program logistics (while collaboration, consultation with stakeholders and use of a grievance committee are encouraged).

2.2.4 County Coordinator

A county office coordinator is assigned by the Extension district director to each Extension county office. The duties and responsibilities of the county office coordinator are captured in the guidance document, "County Office Leadership." These responsibilities include serving as the official point of contact between the county and the local Extension office, administering and tracking the Extension county budget, supervising county-paid support staff, initiating regular office meetings and facilitating a favorable work environment. The county office coordinator also serves as the unit record coordinator and is responsible for ensuring that all Extension records are managed to be consistent with the NDSU and North Dakota University System records retention schedules.

2.2.5 4-H Program Assistant

The 4-H program assistant is a county employee who works closely with Extension agents to support the 4-H program. If a county does not have this position, the following responsibilities must be delegated among the NDSU Extension staff. Unlike Extension agents, the 4-H program assistant does not participate in the educational or teaching components of the program.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Volunteer management
 - Recruits and manages 4-H adult and teen volunteers.
- · Outreach and communication
 - Facilitates and coordinates outreach events and activities related to 4-H, including through social media.
 - Manages 4-H newsletters and other communication tools.
- · Event coordination
 - Recruits judges and coaches for 4-H events.
 - Coordinates activities related to the county fairs or 4-H Achievement Days.
- Logistical support
 - Provides operational support for various aspects of the county 4-H program.

2.2.6 County Support Staff

County support staff are integral members of all Extension offices, typically serving as the initial point of contact for the public. Support staff play a vital role in supporting the delivery of high-quality educational programs by managing the office and facilitating access to materials. County support staff are not authorized to deliver direct educational programs for 4-H, nor are they authorized to complete 4-H tax documents.

Roles and Responsibilities

- · Public interaction
 - Serves as the first point of contact for the public, answering inquiries and providing information.
- Office operations
 - Aids Extension agents and 4-H program assistants with administrative and logistical tasks.
- Material distribution
 - Distributes 4-H project sheets, recruitment materials, project guides and the North Dakota State Fair 4-H exhibit list to the public.

2.3 4-H Council

The 4-H council is a collaborative body of 4-H volunteers that works closely with the Extension county and tribal offices to ensure the effective implementation and operation of 4-H programs. Its primary role is advisory and administrative, focusing on the broader strategy and direction of 4-H activities in the county.

For more information on 4-H councils, see 4-H Council Structure.

Key Characteristics

- Purpose
 - Works with Extension county staff to plan, promote, develop, implement, execute and evaluate highquality 4-H youth development programming that meets the needs and interests of the county's youth.
 - Partners with the local Extension office to assess the needs and interests of local youth, ensuring that educational programs are relevant, 4-H missiondriven and beneficial to the community.
- Membership
 - May include 4-H leaders and members, as well as parents, guardians, school personnel, youth workers, stakeholders and other community members interested in youth development.

- · Advisory Role
 - Advises the local Extension agent on establishing
 4-H policies and procedures. However, the
 Extension agent retains the final authority and
 responsibility for the county's 4-H program.
- · Voice of Volunteers
 - Acts as the voice of local 4-H volunteers, contributing to program direction, identifying and setting goals and helping with decision-making processes.

2.4 4-H Club

A 4-H club is a chartered, grassroots organization that directly engages youth in personal development and service learning through structured activities and leadership opportunities. It serves as the primary delivery method for hands-on education and experiential learning of the 4-H Youth Development Program.

Key Characteristics

- Youth empowerment
 - Focuses on empowering youth through personal development activities, career exploration and community outreach initiatives.
- Membership requirements
 - Consists of at least five youth from three different families, with members between ages five and 18 (for age requirements, see Age Requirements).
- · Organizational structure
 - Is organized with elected officers such as president, vice president, secretary and treasurer to foster leadership skills among youth members.
- · Official charter
 - Officially chartered and operates in partnership with the county 4-H council and the NDSU Extension agent to ensure alignment with broader 4-H goals and federal, state and local policy and standards.
- · Hands-on activities
 - Engages youth in hands-on learning experiences, projects and activities that promote skill development, teamwork and service-learning.

2.4.1 4-H Club Leader

The 4-H volunteer club leader is a pivotal figure in the 4-H program, dedicated to guiding and supporting youth through a range of developmental activities and projects. Their role is comprehensive and involves multiple responsibilities to ensure the holistic growth and wellbeing of the club members.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Building relationships
 - Develops and maintains caring and supportive relationships with all club members to foster a sense of belonging, inclusivity, safety and trust.
- · Educational guidance
 - Provides opportunities for meaningful learning experiences through hands-on projects and educational activities.
- Life skills development
 - Elevates youth voice and supports youth-led activities that build essential life skills - like leadership, communication and problem-solving to help them thrive in life and work.
- Service opportunities
 - Encourages and organizes opportunities for members to engage in community service, emphasizing the importance of giving back.
- Youth leadership
 - Encourages youth to take on leadership roles in the club, promoting decision-making and autonomy.
- Inclusive environment
 - Ensures the club is welcoming and inclusive to all members, respecting diversity and fostering a supportive atmosphere.
- Family support
 - Guides and supports 4-H families with event planning, activity participation and overall engagement in the 4-H program.
- Nurturing passion
 - Helps youth identify and nurture their interests and passions in 4-H projects and activities.

2.4.2 4-H Volunteer (Chaperone, activity helper, guest speaker, etc.)

4-H Volunteers serving in various roles such as chaperone, activity helper, guest speaker, judge, committee member or event facilitator provide crucial support to the 4-H program. A 4-H volunteer may serve in a variety of capacities based on their interests, skills and time. Opportunities range from short-term to long-term commitments.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Chaperone
 - Supervision: Ensuring the safety and well-being of 4-H members during events, trips and activities.
 - Behavior Management: Monitoring and managing member behavior, and maintaining a positive and respectful environment.
 - Support Role: Assisting the club leader and other volunteers with logistical needs during events.

- Program or activity helper
 - Facilitation: Assisting in the execution of specific activities or projects as directed by the club leader.
 - Guidance: Providing hands-on support and guidance to youth during activities, ensuring they understand and engage with the tasks.
 - Logistics: Helping set up and clean-up activities, manage supplies and ensure a smooth operation.

· Guest speaker

- Expertise Sharing: Bringing specialized knowledge or skills to the club, offering workshops, presentations or demonstrations.
- Inspiration: Inspiring and motivating youth by sharing experiences, stories and expertise in a particular field.
- Short-term Engagement: Typically involved in a single event or a short series of events rather than ongoing club activities.
- · Judge at county fair or achievement days
 - Evaluation: Assessing and judging entries in various categories, providing constructive feedback to participants.
 - Fairness and Objectivity: Ensuring a fair and unbiased judging process, upholding the integrity of the competition.
- · Skill instructor and/or coach
 - Teaching: Providing instruction in specific skills or areas of expertise, helping youth develop new competencies.
 - Hands-on Learning: Engaging youth in practical, hands-on learning experiences to reinforce skill acquisition.
 - Contests/events: Bringing youth to test their knowledge, refine their skills and engage in experiential learning opportunities at events, camps or contests.
- Committee member of key role in event management
 - Leadership: Serving in key roles on planning committees for events such as fairs or achievement days.
 - Event Coordination: Helping manage and drive forward local fairs or achievement days, ensuring successful planning and execution.
 - Facilitation: Assisting in the facilitation and management of events, ensuring smooth operation and positive experiences for all participants.

2.5 State 4-H Office

In North Dakota, the 4-H program operates under the authority of NDSU Extension and USDA NIFA. The state 4-H office, located at NDSU in Fargo, holds primary responsibility for the 4-H program. The staff collaborates with other program areas and Extension's leadership to support the state's 4-H initiatives.

Functions of the state 4-H office

- Oversees 4-H program planning teams.
- · Delivers research-based updates to Extension agents.
- · Conducts research and provides onboarding and training for diverse audiences.
- Leads state 4-H contests and oversees 4-H events at the North Dakota State Fair.
- Conducts needs assessments, evaluates programs and addresses critical challenges.
- Supports NDSU Extension agents and 4-H volunteers.

2.5.1 North Dakota 4-H Foundation

The North Dakota 4-H Foundation is a nonprofit partner that supports and strengthens the 4-H Youth Development Program through fundraising, stewardship and advocacy. The Foundation provides resources that expand opportunities for youth, volunteers and staff across the state. It owns and manages the 80-acre North Dakota 4-H Camp in Washburn, North Dakota, which is available year-round for rental for conferences, activities and events. The Foundation is guided by a working volunteer board and employs an executive director, whose record of employment is held by NDSU. This position is supported through a shared salary arrangement between NDSU Extension and the 4-H Foundation. Each year, the Foundation also awards scholarships to youth, helping them pursue higher education and continued leadership development. The Foundation welcomes donations throughout the year, with Giving Hearts Day serving as its largest campaign to support youth programming.

2.5.2 Assistant Director of 4-H Youth **Development**

The assistant director of 4-H Youth Development leads the state 4-H office, overseeing various administrative and programmatic aspects to ensure the success and growth of 4-H programs in North Dakota. The assistant director drives the strategic direction of the 4-H Youth Development Program and ensures its alignment with broader organizational goals.

Roles and Responsibilities

- · Administrative oversight
 - Serves on the Extension Leadership Team (ELT) to establish goals and address initiatives aligned with national and local priorities.
 - Establishes goals and addresses initiatives aligned with national and local priorities.
 - Provides oversight to the state 4-H office staff, ensuring efficient operation and coordination of program activities.
- · Program development
 - Works toward developing innovative and impactful 4-H programs that address the needs and interests of youth across the state.
- · Policy and compliance
 - Establishes and oversees policies related to 4-H program operations.
 - Ensures compliance with insurance and financial regulations.
- Budget management
 - Manages and secures financial resources allocated to the 4-H Youth Development Program.
 - Develops and monitors the program budget to ensure effective utilization of funds.
- Conflict resolution
 - Facilitates conflict resolution and mediation as needed to address challenges within the program.
- Fundraising and collaboration
 - Serves on the North Dakota 4-H Foundation board to assist in identifying financial resources for 4-H programming.
 - Works closely with stakeholders and partners to enhance support for 4-H initiatives.

2.5.3 State 4-H Specialist

State 4-H specialists, part of the state 4-H office, leverage technical expertise to create and implement innovative Extension programming for diverse audiences. Specialists may not always be based at the NDSU campus. Some specialists hold faculty positions with teaching components and may be on a tenure track. Specialists are required to hold a master's degree and are preferred to hold a Ph.D. degree.

Key Responsibilities

• Develops and leads 4-H programs based on statewide needs identified through program planning teams, needs assessments and surveys.

- Provides research-based information to support Extension agents and personnel.
- · Engages in grant writing and secures funding for program interests.

2.5.4 State 4-H Coordinator

State 4-H coordinators, also part of the state 4-H office, use technical expertise to design and implement innovative Extension programming for diverse audiences (such as campers, volunteers or North Dakota State Fair attendees). Coordinators may not always be based at the NDSU campus. Unlike specialists, coordinators are not required to hold a master's degree or Ph.D.

Key Responsibilities

- Develops and leads 4-H programs addressing statewide concerns identified through various inputs.
- Provides research-based information to support Extension agents and personnel.
- · Participates in grant writing and secures funding for program interests.

2.5.5 State 4-H Administrative Secretary or **Program Assistant**

The state 4-H administrative secretaries oversee essential platforms and support various statewide 4-H program efforts. These secretaries are crucial in facilitating the smooth operation of various statewide 4-H activities and initiatives.

Key Responsibilities

- Manage 4-H Online, FairEntry, and UltraCamp platforms.
- Supports specialists and coordinators.
- · Assists with volunteer support including the Sterling platform.
- · Assists with 4-H club charters, contests, events and activities.
- Oversees 4-H insurance compliance.
- Facilitates national 4-H leadership events and supports North Dakota 4-H Ambassadors.
- Works with NDSU Human Resources, processing onboarding and time slips.
- · Manages educational trunk checkout and updates literature and resources.
- Assists with 4-H activities at the North Dakota State Fair.

3.4-H Iconography 🛆



The visual identity of 4-H represents more than just tradition — it embodies the 4-H mission, values and commitment to youth development and investment in young people to prepare them for their lives and

careers. Rooted in the iconic green clover and guided by the 4-H pledge, the program is built on the belief that all youth deserve the opportunity to thrive. Through the 4-H Thriving Model and the Beyond Ready initiative, 4-H leaders equip young people with the skills, confidence and experiences they need to lead, grow and contribute wherever life takes them. This section outlines the mission, vision and guiding principles of 4-H, along with the proper use and authorization of the 4-H name and emblem. Together, these elements create a unified identity that inspires, connects and drives the impact of 4-H in North Dakota and beyond.

3.1 North Dakota 4-H Mission Statement

North Dakota 4-H prepares youth for life and careers by building the skills, confidence and resilience needed to thrive in an ever-changing world.

3.2 National 4-H Authorized Policy

The 4-H charter, issued by the USDA and signed by the secretary of agriculture's designated representative, is the only document that officially recognizes a 4-H club for the conduct of 4-H Youth Development programs. The official 4-H charter, issued by USDA, is obtained from the Division of Youth and 4-H at USDA NIFA. State and local charters that do not include a USDA signatory are not considered official 4-H charters.

Land-grant university 4-H offices are required to maintain documentation on the issuance of 4-H charters to 4-H clubs within their respective boundaries. Charters must be issued when establishing a 4-H club. When 4-H clubs that have been long-established and verification of a valid charter is not available, issuance of a new 4-H charter is necessary.

A 4-H charter is an agreement by the 4-H club and the Division of Youth and 4-H at the USDA NIFA. It is an agreement by the club with the land grant institutions' state or local 4-H Extension office to follow and abide by all state and local 4-H policies, procedures and other requirements.

4-H charters are agreements within the context of the overall 4-H program. 4-H charters do not qualify a 4-H club as a legal entity according to state government and business policies and definitions. 4-H charters do not allow a recognized 4-H club to share their rights and privileges with any other person, group or business.

The USDA NIFA Division of Youth and 4-H charter, once issued, will be valid for as long as the 4-H entity receiving the 4-H charter exists and the entity abides by the policies, procedures and other requirements set forth. If the 4-H entity disbands, separates into multiple entities or changes its name, a new charter will need to be issued. The USDA does not mandate a charter expiration date. Additionally, even with a change in the USDA-designated representative, the USDA 4-H charters remain valid. However, 4-H charters may be revoked at any time by the state or local 4-H Extension office for failure by the club to meet any aspect of the agreement.

3.2.1 4-H Vision

A world in which youth and adults learn, grow and work together as a catalyst for positive change.

3.2.2 The 4-H 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.

The 4-H pledge is recited at the beginning of 4-H club meetings, conferences and other events.

3.2.3 4-H Pledge Hand Movements

The 4-H pledge is traditionally recited with accompanying hand motions to reinforce the meaning behind each line. These movements provide a visual representation of the pledge's core values and enhance engagement among youth participants.

- 1. "I pledge my head to clearer thinking" Place right hand gently on the side of the forehead, symbolizing thoughtful decisionmaking and wisdom.
- 2. "My heart to greater loyalty" Move right hand to the chest, over the heart, representing sincerity, honesty and devotion.
- 3. "My hands to larger service" Extend both hands forward, palms up, symbolizing a willingness to help others and contribute to the community.
- 4. "My health to better living" (Optional) Hang arms loosely by the sides, or place both hands on hips or flex arms to demonstrate strength and a commitment to personal well-being.
- 5. "For my club, my community, my country, and my world" — Extend both arms outward, slightly raised, representing a broad impact and commitment to making a difference locally and globally or hold hands out and use both hands to demonstrate a small circle for club, then draw in the air a bigger circle for country and end with a larger circle for world.

These simple but meaningful hand motions can engage participants, especially younger 4-H members, and reinforce the pledge's values in a memorable way.

3.2.4 The 4-H Motto

To Make the Best Better

The 4-H motto inspires young people to continue to learn and grow, to make their best efforts better through participating in educational experiences, setting new goals and learning to challenge themselves in diverse and fun ways. In doing so, youth gain essential life skills to lead, thrive and make positive changes. The 4-H motto supports the North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program's mission of engaging youth in reaching their fullest potential.

I pledge:





to Larger Service

to Better Living

... for my club, my Community, my Country and my World.

3.2.5 The 4-H Slogan

Learn by Doing

This phrase summarizes the educational philosophy of the 4-H program. Young people learn best when they are involved in their learning.

3.2.6 The 4-H Creed

I believe in 4-H Club work for the opportunity it will give me to become a useful citizen.

I believe in the training of my HEAD for the power it will give me to think, plan and to reason.

I believe in the training of my HEART for the nobleness it will give me to be kind, sympathetic and true.

I believe in the training of my HANDS for the ability it will give me to be helpful, skillful, and useful.

I believe in the training of my HEALTH for the strength it will give me to enjoy life, to resist disease, and to work efficiently.

I believe in my country, my state, and my community and in my responsibility for their development.

In all these things I believe, and am willing to dedicate my efforts to their fulfillment.

The 4-H creed is a statement that inspires young people to grow in all aspects of their lives - head, heart, hands and health. It emphasizes the importance of lifelong learning, fostering compassion and leadership, contributing to the well-being of others and maintaining a strong sense of personal responsibility. By committing to these values, the creed encourages youth to become engaged citizens who positively impact their communities and the world around them.

3.3 The 4-H Name

The official 4-H name is written as 4-H. The numeral "4" is separated from a capital "H" with a hyphen (not a dash, slash or space). Do not replace the 4 H with "Four-H." Do not use the 4-H emblem in place of the word 4-H in a title or text. Avoid separation of any of the elements of the 4-H name at the end of sentences.

In "4-H'er," the apostrophe always goes between the "H" and "er" because it replaces the "memb-" in "member."

3.4 4-H Emblem

All 4-H entities, as part of a nationally recognized organization, are authorized to use the 4-H Name and Emblem for educational purposes in 4-H youth development programming. This authorization is granted under federal regulation 18 U.S.C. 707 and in accordance with the requirements set forth by USDA/NIFA, in partnership with NDSU Extension, the state's designated 1862 land-grant university. Use of the 4-H Name and Emblem must comply with the laws and regulations established by the U.S. Congress, the Secretary of Agriculture, NIFA and the Division of Youth and 4-H.

To be authorized to use the 4-H Name and Emblem, a 4-H council and/or club must be officially chartered.

The 4-H emblem symbolizes the aim of effective learning for each member by using their head, heart, hands and health.

Head: 4-H youth take the lead. 4-H'ers engage in problemsolving and gain essential life skills like critical thinking and decision-making to grow their ability to solve complex problems.

Heart: 4-H helps youth build strong relationships with peers and adults by accepting responsibility and developing values. Youth participating in 4-H engage in emotional development: developing good attitudes toward work and learning, developing acceptance and

appreciation of others and learning to lead with selfdiscipline, integrity and communication.

Hands: 4-H provides youth the opportunity to learn by doing through their talents, creativity and skills, making their communities a better place to live and grow. 4-H experiences provide skills development and learning diverse ways of serving others.

Health: 4-H engages in physical development: understanding and appreciating a growing and changing body. In doing so, youth who participate in 4-H learn to make healthy choices to keep them physically, emotionally and mentally able to do what they need at school, home and in their communities.

Suspected violations in the use of the 4-H Name and Emblem must be reported to the NDSU Extension agent or district director. Violations that extend beyond one county or a multi-county partnership must be reported to the assistant director of the 4-H program.

3.5 The 4-H Colors

The official emblem is a green (RGB: R51, G153 and B102) four-leaf, stemmed clover on a white background. The white symbolizes purity. The green represents nature and is emblematic of youth, life and growth. The clover has a letter "H" in white or metallic gold on each leaf.

3.5.1 Use of 4-H Name and Emblem and Colors



The use of the 4-H emblem is provided by NDSU Extension and must conform to federal regulations. Read the 4-H Name and Emblem Use Handbook for more information.

Primary consideration for granting authorization for 4-H Name and Emblem usage can only be used as authorized by the statute.

4-H clubs receive official authorization to use the 4-H Name and Emblem when they become a chartered 4-H club. Commercial vendors, private organizations or any other entity may obtain authorization from the local Extension office or the state 4-H office by requesting written permission.

Local 4-H clubs are required to work closely with Extension staff when designing apparel or other items that will bear the 4-H Name and Emblem. Extension staff must confirm that the 4-H Name and Emblem is being used according to regulation.

4.4-H Membership and Eligibility A

In 4-H, there's no one-size-fits-all way to participate. Every youth comes from unique circumstances, and their experiences may differ. However, it's crucial for 4-H that membership is documented and organized to ensure consistency, track progress and provide all members with the support they need to succeed.

A 4-H member is considered in good standing when they actively participate, follow the 4-H Code of Conduct, meet club requirements and fulfill project expectations while demonstrating respect, responsibility and commitment to personal growth and community involvement.

4.14-H Year

The North Dakota 4-H year begins Sept. 1 and ends Aug. 31 of each year. The official enrollment platform for North Dakota is 4-H Online.

4.2 Age Requirements

4-H youth development programming is open to all youth between the ages of five through 18 years old before Sept. 1, which is the start of the 4-H year (special circumstances may apply).

Youth who turn five years old before Sept. 1 are eligible to join. Conversely, people who reach the age of 19 before Sept. 1 are not eligible for 4-H membership or participation. They may apply to be 4-H volunteer leaders or state 4-H ambassadors.

4.2.1 4-H Age

A participant's 4-H age is their age as of Aug. 31, just before the start of the new 4-H year on Sept. 1.

- If a youth turns eight on or after Sept. 1, their 4-H age is
- If a youth turns 18 on or after Sept. 1, their 4-H age is 17. Cloverbud participation begins at age five.

Youth become eligible for the regular 4-H program when they reach a 4-H age of eight.

The final year of eligibility is at a 4-H age of 18.

Some local programs developed for youth with special needs or disabilities may have different age protocols. These decisions are determined at the local level to best meet the needs of the youth involved.

4.2.2 Special Circumstances for Age Requirements



Age requirements are flexible for special circumstances involving youth or adults with special needs/disabilities. 4-H educational programs need to be sufficiently flexible to allow the participation of youth with physical and/or mental challenges. For assistance in evaluating what actions might be necessary or appropriate regarding accommodations due to special circumstances, contact the state 4-H office.

4.3 Enrollment

4-H members, volunteers and leaders are responsible each year for enrolling in 4-H. NDSU Extension staff are responsible for overseeing the process. Adults becoming volunteers for the first time will be screened as a part of the enrollment process. All volunteers working directly with youth are required to be screened and trained every three years and enrolled annually in 4-H Online. One-time volunteers, such as judges or presenters, who are under the direct supervision of an enrolled and approved 4-H volunteer or Extension professional, do not need to be screened.

4.3.1 4-H Members Enrollment

For members, this enrollment includes completing online enrollment in 4-H Online each year, selecting projects and meeting other county expectations (such as paying dues, if applicable).

A participant must be enrolled in at least one project area to be eligible to participate in exhibitions and contests unless specific rules for the event permit participation of non-4-H members.

- Project Area: An area of study over the 4-H year. Example: Animal Science.
- Project: A narrow area of study under the larger project area. Example: Horse.
- Exhibit: An item or animal that relates to a project in which the 4-H member is enrolled may be entered for judging at a county fair or 4-H Achievement Days.
 - Living Exhibit An entry by a 4-H member in Communication Arts, Clothing Revue, Project Expo, 4-H Engineering and Design Challenge or Consumer Decision Making contests
 - Static Exhibit A nonliving item or display related to a project in which the youth is enrolled
 - Animal Exhibit A living animal related to a project in which the youth is enrolled

Note: 4-H'ers may only enroll in a given project area within one county or state. For example, if a youth enrolls in the Animal Science project area in Cass County, they cannot also enroll in the same project area in Barnes County or in another state.

Explore the North Dakota 4-H Projects and Project Guide here.

Parents or legal guardians are required to review and acknowledge all necessary agreements in 4-H Online as part of their child's enrollment. These agreements include, but are not limited to:

- Code of Conduct
- Assumption of Risk and Release Statement
- Media Release Statement
- Medical Authorization Statement
- Privacy Statement Authorization
- Evaluation Release
- North Dakota 4-H Outdoor Skills Shooting Sports Informed Consent Form (if applicable)
- Virtual Meeting Consent
- Transportation Liability Statement
- Behavioral Expectations and Consequences
- Special Needs and Accommodations Request
- Parental Consent and Minor Participation Agreement
- Confidentiality and Data Protection Agreement
- Financial Responsibility Agreement
- Water Activities Risk Statement (if applicable)

These acknowledgments ensure that families understand program policies, participant expectations, liability considerations, and consent requirements for various activities.

Members must sign the Code of Conduct, acknowledging that they have read and agree to abide by the North Dakota 4-H Participation Expectations (YPP01) and the North Dakota 4-H Policy Manual.

If participating in shooting sports, additional consent forms are required. See ND 4-H Google Drive for additional forms (Contest Folder > Shooting Sports Folder).

If dual-enrolling in multiple counties, see the Special Circumstances section.

4.3.2 4-H Volunteers Enrollment

Volunteers play an essential role in fulfilling the mission of 4-H. Volunteering offers the opportunity to share expertise, learn something new, make community connections and develop new skills.

For the multiple levels of volunteer engagement, see the Volunteer Registration Process section.

4.4 Special Circumstances (i



Members may need understanding and cooperation from 4-H leadership through particular circumstances or events. Each situation is different and may need to be developed on a case-by-case basis.

4.4.1 Married or Pregnant 4-H Members

Marriage, pregnancy or parenting does not change eligibility for events or activities or exempt members from program rules or code of conduct.

4.4.2 4-H Members Moving

When 4-H members/participants in good standing (attend all required meetings, enrolled, meet club deadlines, etc.) move to another county and/or state (including foster children), enrollment and participation may be transferred to the new Extension office upon request of the 4-H family. Enrollment fees, if applicable, will be reviewed by NDSU Extension personnel and may be prorated based on the date of the transfer. Records transferred into the county will be accepted and considered as part of the individual's achievement records.

4.4.3 Dual Enrollment and Exhibiting

There are a variety of situations in which youth and volunteers can have dual membership. Adults who work with 4-H youth development programming must consider the individual youth and how participation in 4-H youth development programming can benefit that youth. Efforts must be made to accommodate all youth interested in participating in 4-H youth development programming.

Youth who live for part of the year in one county or state and change residences so that they live in a different county or state during part of the year (for example, a member lives with one parent for nine months and another parent for three months) will be accepted into the ongoing 4-H program and be considered as having a dual membership.

Youth can participate in projects or programs not currently offered in their primary 4-H county. Youth may enroll in shooting sports projects in more than one county. Enrollment must occur by discipline (such as shotgun or air rifle) based on available certified instructors. Youth may not be enrolled in the same discipline or the same project area in more than one county.

A 4-H family looking to dual enroll in another county must submit an Open Enrollment Application to the NDSU Extension office in the county they wish to join. The local 4-H council in that county may set participation parameters for the participant/family interested in open enrollment, and then the council will approve or deny the application.

Once a decision is made, the completed application including documented approval or denial — must be recorded in both counties where the youth is enrolled.

This process is important for a number of reasons:

- Ensure clear communication and mutual understanding between counties
- Maintain consistent expectations for participation and supervision
- Support program integrity by aligning youth experiences with local policies and resource availability
- Ensure program capability enough coaches, enough 4-H leaders, proper ratios, etc.

Open enrollment provides opportunities for youth to engage across county lines while ensuring all parties - families, club leaders, agents and councils - remain aligned and informed.

4.4.4 Exhibit and Participation Protocols for **Dual Enrollment**

To support the integrity of the 4-H experience and promote meaningful engagement, members enrolled in more than one county may not duplicate specific 4-H experiences by participating in more than one county or state in the same program year. This ensures a fair and

consistent experience while reinforcing key elements of the 4-H Thriving Model, including personal responsibility, intentional learning and contribution.

All projects and exhibits must be completed within the past year and must not have been previously exhibited at a county fair or 4-H Achievement Day. This guideline supports the development of mastery by encouraging youth to reflect on recent learning, growth, and progress each year.

Youth may not enroll in the same project area in two counties. All components of a project area — including both live animal and static exhibits - must be exhibited in the same county. Youth may not exhibit a live animal in one county and a static project from the same project area in another.

Example: Showing a live heifer from the beef project in Cass County and a poster board on different ways to grill beef products in Traill County. Both are from the beef project area.

Duplicate exhibition of the same item or animal in multiple counties is not allowed. The only exception is for live horses that are being exhibited solely to meet qualification requirements for the North Dakota State Fair.

An additional exception to the policy prohibiting exhibition of the same project area across county lines may apply in cases involving live animal projects. This exception is strictly limited to situations where a member's home county does not offer a show for the specific species. In such cases, the member may be permitted to exhibit their live animal in a neighboring county that does offer the appropriate show.

Example: If a youth wants to exhibit a rabbit and their home county does not host a live rabbit show, they may show the live rabbit in a neighboring county that does. Because the Rabbit Project is an enrolled project in a different county, static rabbit projects (e.g., posters, educational displays, a wooden rabbit show table) must also be exhibited in the same county where the rabbit project is enrolled in order to remain consistent with overall policy.

For team eligibility in competitive events, please refer to the specific contest rules and protocols. Coaches and Extension county agents must be informed to ensure proper eligibility and representation.

4-H members may apply for county-level awards, scholarships or vouchers in the county where they are officially enrolled, provided they are not applying for similar recognitions in another county where they may also hold membership. When competing for state or national

awards, scholarships or trips, youth represent the county of enrollment. If selected for multiple opportunities in the same or consecutive years, members must choose one; they cannot receive more than one award or recognition for the same activity within the same timeframe.

Counties may establish additional local participation protocols to meet the needs of their programs. However, these local protocols must align with and not override or conflict with state-level policy.

4.4.5 Cross-county Enrollment

NDSU Extension recognizes 4-H members and volunteers of the 4-H program in which they are enrolled in 4-H regardless of their residence. The 4-H family looking to enroll in a county that is not their place of residence must submit an Open Enrollment Application to the NDSU Extension office that resides in the county of interest. The local 4-H council will review the form. Each council must set parameters for open enrollment members/ families and then complete the application submitted by the incoming family, documenting approval or disapproval. The completed form must be on record in both enrolled counties.

4-H County Switch Guidance and Approval **Process**

Switching a youth's primary county in 4-H Online — even if only for FairEntry purposes — is considered a dual enrollment and must follow the county switch policy as described above.

To authorize a county switch (whether temporary or permanent), written approval is required from all of the following:

- The Extension agent or assistant from the youth's current county
- The 4-H club leader or coach associated with the youth
- The Extension agent or 4-H assistant from the receiving county

While verbal approvals can be gathered initially, written confirmation (such as an email) must be documented before any updates are made in 4-H Online.

Switches made without proper oversight can result in the following:

 Compromise appropriate adult-to-youth supervision ratios, especially in project areas like shooting sports that require certified instructors and equipment planning

- Place unexpected strain on clubs or county resources, particularly when additional youth are added without notice
- Undermine local processes intended to vet participation and maintain high program quality

If a county switch request arises, these steps must be followed:

- 1. Gather the written approvals listed above.
- 2. Forward the documentation to the state 4-H office.
- 3. Once all approvals are in place, the state office will assist with updating the member's record in 4-H Online and, if necessary, help facilitate dual enrollment.

This process ensures quality programming, safety standards and the efforts of local 4-H staff and volunteers are respected and maintained.

4.4.6 Independent Membership

Although 4-H encourages participating in club/group settings to promote friendship and interaction with other youth and adults, this is not always possible for some youth. Individual membership or study is for those youth who cannot participate in a club because of a disability, geographical distance, religious custom or other special circumstance. If a youth wants to join as an independent member, they must establish a written plan of action that parallels the general policies that are in effect for club members.

Independent 4-H members must establish the following two plans of action:

- · create a written report outlining project goals
- develop a list of events that the independent member will assist with (at least one)

Additional responsibilities may include but are not limited to the following:

- attendance at a specified number of meetings
- · a written report detailing mentorship
- · leadership and/or public speaking experiences

Criteria must be set to hold accountability if an independent membership is allowed. The 4-H council has the right to allow or disallow independent membership. For an independent member checklist, see the appendix.

4.4.7 4-H/FFA Involvement

Many North Dakota 4-H members are also involved with their local FFA chapters. Involvement in one organization does not hinder the involvement in the other. FFA is a fundamental part of a school's agricultural program. The development of leadership is an integral part of both 4-H and FFA.

The same animal of any livestock species may be exhibited in one 4-H or FFA show at the North Dakota State Fair, but not both. For example, the exact same 4-H heifer cannot also be shown in the FFA heifer class, regardless of joint ownership by 4-H and FFA members.

4.5 Cloverbud Program

The 4-H Cloverbud program introduces youth ages 5 to 8 to the world of 4-H through hands-on projects, new friendships and confidence-building experiences. Cloverbud members develop essential life skills, ignite their curiosity, and explore their passions in a supportive environment. Youth ages 5 to 7 as of Sept. 1 are eligible to enroll. Programs must be developmentally appropriate and tailored to meet the unique needs of Cloverbud members.

The 4-H Cloverbud program is noncompetitive, ensuring that members engage in activities without the pressure of being compared to their peers. Instead, the focus is on personal growth and enjoyment, with special attention given to age-appropriate adjustments, such as the length of activities, reading levels and hands-on learning opportunities. This approach prioritizes individual needs, fostering an environment to develop at their own pace.

The first year of eligibility for participation in the 4-H Cloverbud program is the 4-H age of five.

The last year of eligibility for participation in the 4-H Cloverbud program is the 4-H age of seven.

Cloverbud participants are not eligible to participate in state contests and events. Cloverbud members do not participate in ongoing projects but rather explore diverse project areas throughout their Cloverbud experiences.

To ensure safety, Cloverbud members participating in hands-on activities, exhibitions or demonstrations involving animals must use an animal they have prior experience with and must be closely supervised by an adult at all times.

It is acceptable for a group of Cloverbud members to form a club. While Cloverbud clubs do not require formal officers, they must provide age-appropriate opportunities for youth to begin practicing basic leadership skills such as leading pledges or helping with simple tasks. The focus must remain on exploration, teamwork, and developmentally appropriate experiences rather than formal structure.

Cloverbud clubs must encourage youth to learn how to work together, share with others, listen respectfully and follow directions — laying the foundation for future group participation and positive youth development. For more guidance, refer to the helpful document Understanding and Working with Youth.

4.6 Online Enrollment



Eligible youth have the flexibility to enroll in North Dakota 4-H youth development programming throughout the year. While certain counties may have

specific enrollment deadlines (i.e., 4-H project selection deadlines) for existing 4-H members, youth are welcome to enroll at any point. The enrollment process is managed through 4-H Online, a web-based system used by NDSU Extension for 4-H enrollment, data collection and event management. All 4-H participants must be enrolled in 4-H Online to be covered under the American Income Life Insurance Company. Following the conclusion of the 4-H year at the end of August, 4-H Online will undergo a brief shutdown for updates and maintenance, during which access to the system and enrollment is temporarily unavailable. Enrolling in 4-H also involves meeting other expectations and fulfilling additional county requirements.

A completed 4-H Online enrollment includes the following:

- 1. Agreement to YPD1002 Code of Conduct. (required)
- 2. Acknowledgement of Evaluation Release: ability to complete evaluations to determine program effectiveness and promote the program. (optional may decline)
- 3. Acknowledgement of Media Release: ability to use a child's name/photograph in publications, advertisements or news articles about 4-H activities. (optional — may decline)
- 4. Permission to seek medical and/or hospital care due to illness or injury (optional — may decline)

- 5. Release of liability in consideration of being permitted to participate in 4-H (required)
- 6. Acknowledgment that all contact and health information requested is private but can be used to help ensure safe participation in the 4-H program and provide information to the enrolled youth and their family (required)

For language of these acknowledgments, see Agreements and Forms for Enrollment and Event Participation in the Appendix.

4.6.1 4-H Online Enrollment Deadlines

While counties may set enrollment deadlines to encourage timely participation and project selection, youth must be allowed to enroll in 4-H at any time throughout the year.

Some events and project areas may have specific enrollment deadlines that must be met in order to participate. These deadlines are permissible when necessary to maintain educational integrity, ensure youth safety or allow for effective program planning.

Counties may establish reasonable deadlines for participation in certain events or programs under these circumstances.

For more information, see Enrollment Deadlines section.

4.6.2 FairEntry



FairEntry, similar to 4-H Online, is a key platform used in North Dakota to support 4-H programming. It is a

centralized, web-based system designed to streamline the registration and management of county fairs, 4-H Achievement Days and the North Dakota State Fair including both 4-H animal shows and static exhibits.

FairEntry supports NDSU Extension staff, families and volunteers by reducing paperwork, minimizing errors and improving the efficiency of event planning and reporting

Benefits and Value

FairEntry enhances the 4-H experience by simplifying core processes such as exhibitor registration, class entry, premium tracking, show program generation and results management. Because FairEntry integrates with 4-H Online, member and animal information can transfer seamlessly - reducing duplicate data entry and maintaining accurate records.

There are many key benefits:

- Consistent project and animal reporting across counties and at the state level.
- · Improved accuracy in fair results, awards and premium tracking.
- Reduced administrative burden and increased transparency for families.
- Streamlined advancement of youth and exhibits from county to state-level events.

FairEntry is the core platform used to manage the North Dakota State Fair 4-H program, providing uniformity, accountability, and coordination across all participating counties. Counties are required to use FairEntry to ensure smooth integration into all North Dakota State Fair 4-H operations.

To support accurate and timely processing, all 4-H live animal information must be entered into 4-H Online once the animal is under the ownership or lease of the 4-H'er. This ensures that essential information flows correctly into FairEntry for use in county fairs, 4-H Achievement Days and the state fair. Proper and timely entry helps support eligibility tracking, event planning and comprehensive recordkeeping.

5. Methods of 4-H Participation

Youth may participate in 4-H through a variety of program delivery modes, including the following:

- · organized 4-H club
- · after-school program
- day camp
- · overnight camp
- · special interest group
- · contests and team practice
- · the Cloverbud program
- · community program

5.1 Participating in Organized 4-H Clubs

A 4-H club is an organized group of youth led by an adult for a long-term, progressing series of educational experiences and activities. The purpose of a 4-H club is to provide positive youth development opportunities to meet the needs of young people. In a 4-H club, youth experience belonging, mastery, independence and generosity. The Essential Elements and the 4-H Thriving Model foster those educational opportunities tied to the land-grant university knowledge base. 4-H clubs may meet in any location accessible by all, must identify elected officers, hold regular meetings (in-person, webbased, hybrid or a combination) and have a set of bylaws approved by the membership to govern the club. For more information, see 4-H Clubs section.

5.1.1 Community Clubs

Community clubs typically meet in the evenings or on weekends and offer self-chosen multiple learning experiences and activities. Membership is based on the community in which the club lives.

5.1.2 In-School Clubs

In-school clubs meet during school hours and planned activities beyond school enrichment.

5.1.3 After-school Clubs

4-H after-school clubs are organized within a school or community setting outside of school hours. The purpose of an after-school 4-H club or program is to provide care for youth while parents/guardians are unavailable.

5.1.4 Military 4-H Clubs

Military 4-H clubs are organized by the Armed Forces, often on military installations, and principally for military dependents.

5.1.5 4-H Project Clubs

4-H project club membership is based on a common interest, usually focused on the area of one project area (such as Animal Science).

5.2 Participating in 4-H Programs Without Officers

A 4-H program is an organized group of youth led by an adult for a short-term educational experience or set of activities. The goal of a 4-H program is to provide highquality positive youth development opportunities that meet the diverse needs of young people. In these programs, youth experience a sense of belonging, develop new skills (mastery), take on responsibilities (independence) and give back to others (generosity).

While having elected officers is not required in a 4-H program, it is strongly encouraged whenever appropriate. Officer roles offer meaningful leadership experiences and give youth a chance to practice responsibility, communication, teamwork, and decision-making. These opportunities align with the Essential Elements and the 4-H Thriving Model, both of which are grounded in research and connected to the land-grant university mission. Even in short-term or project-based programs, integrating leadership roles can deepen engagement and help youth build confidence and transferable life skills.

5.2.1 School Enrichment Programs

In-school programming is usually delivered to a group of youth in a sequence of learning experiences that adhere to the school curriculum in cooperation with school officials during regular school hours. Oftentimes, youth in these programs may or may not be members of 4-H clubs This may involve direct teaching by Extension staff, trained volunteers, teachers or industry professionals.

5.2.2 Day Camping Programs

Youth may participate in an Extension-planned educational experience consisting of single-day or multiple-day programs where youth return home each evening and are not restricted to members of 4-H clubs. This could include a workshop, project day or clinic.

5.2.3 Residential or Overnight Camping **Programs**

Youth may participate in an Extension-planned educational experience consisting of multiple days of learning opportunities that require the youth to stay overnight for at least one night away from home (residential, primitive or travel camping) and is not restricted to members of 4-H clubs. This includes conferences or retreats.

5.2.4 Special Interest/Short-term Programs

Groups of youth may meet for specific learning experiences that involve direct teaching by Extension staff, trained volunteers, teachers or industry professionals. The program is not part of a school enrichment curriculum and is not restricted to members of 4-H clubs. Multiple-day meetings can be a short-term program. Direct audience contact hours must be at least six hours. No officers need to be present, and business meetings are not held.

5.2.5 Independent Families or Members

Planned learning can occur independently of a formal group setting like a club. This may be an individual, paired or family learning effort. For many youth, their exposure to 4-H experiences and learning materials comes through activities within their family or an independent membership. While 4-H encourages participation in club settings to promote friendships and interaction with other youth and adults, for some youth, this is not always possible. Families and independent members are welcome to participate as a part of the 4-H experience.

5.2.6 Online Technology

Youth may be offered learning experiences through Extension via online technology.

5.2.7 Contests and Team Practices

Youth engage in diverse learning and obtain experience by preparing for and competing in contests. While direct education may not be involved, youth explore decision-making, note-taking and organizational skills, communication skills, critical thinking and other essential life skills. This is not considered an organized 4-H club and does not elect officer positions.

5.2.8 Community Programs

A goal through Extension is for communities to be brought together to learn and grow. A community program consists of youth and adults learning and engaging in opportunities and experiences simultaneously. Not all youth participants will be enrolled 4-H members. Examples may include a community garden, a grilling event or a community beautification project involving more than just 4-H'ers.

5.3 Recognizing Clubs' **Achievements**

The overall goal of 4-H clubs is to develop enthusiastic young people who boldly take action to demonstrate life skills as capable, caring, confident and competent youth of character, thus contributing to improving themselves. their club, their community, their country and their world. There are various ways to recognize the successes of 4-H members and clubs. Extension agents are ultimately responsible for deciding what appropriate recognition looks like.

The following are ways of recognizing members:

- Achievement awards: Recognize members for accomplishments in projects or areas of interest.
- Record book competitions: Award youth for maintaining detailed and accurate 4-H records.
- Scholarships: Provide financial support for higher education based on 4-H achievements.
- Leadership awards: Acknowledge youth who demonstrate exceptional leadership skills.
- Community service awards: Recognize significant contributions to community service projects.
- Public speaking contests: Award excellence in public speaking, presentations and demonstrations.

- Judging contests: Recognizes proficiency in judging skills in various project areas.
- Project awards: Awards members with certificates, ribbons or trophies for outstanding work in 4-H projects.
- County, state and national conferences: Provides opportunities to attend and be recognized at conferences for exceptional 4-H involvement.
- 4-H club officer positions: Selecting leadership roles within the local 4-H clubs, providing recognition and responsibility.

- 4-H Ambassadors: Selects youth to serve as representatives and advocates for the 4-H program.
- Fair exhibits and competitions: Give awards for exhibits and participation in county and state fairs.
- Honor cords and medals: Give special recognition at graduation for long-term commitment and achievements in 4-H.
- Pins and badges: Award members tokens of achievement for completing certain milestones or levels in projects.
- Feature stories and newsletters: Highlights members' achievements in local, county or state 4-H newsletters and media.

6.4-H Club Structure \triangle

6.1 Club Definition

North Dakota 4-H and 4-H National Headquarters define a 4-H club as an organized group of at least five youth from three different families who meet regularly with adult volunteers or staff for a long-term, progressive series of educational experiences. North Dakota further requires that those members be enrolled in 4-H Online, the 4-H state web-based enrollment platform.

6.2 Club Charter

A 4-H club must be chartered by 4-H National Headquarters and the North Dakota state 4-H office to be recognized as part of 4-H and authorized to use the 4-H Name and Emblem. The state 4-H office grants 4-H club charters, which formally recognize a club's affiliation with 4-H, holding the only authority to grant a club the permission to use the 4-H Name and Emblem. 4-H charters and charter renewals document that a 4-H club complies with state and federal laws and federal, university and state 4-H policies and protocols. A copy of the 4-H official club charter must be kept in the local Extension office.

For more information about 4-H club charters, see 4-H National Headquarters' Charters: The Key to Official Recognition.

Fill out PB430 Request for Official Approval for Establishment of a New 4-H Unit.

6.3 Club Memorandum of Understanding

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Between NDSU Extension and 4-H Councils and 4-H Clubs in Good Standing must be carefully read and signed by each 4-H council and 4-H club. This is signed for every new 4-H club and every three years for all active clubs.

It is recommended that this be incorporated into the 4-H volunteer screening process and again during the three-year volunteer rescreening procedure.

6.4 Club Standards

4-H clubs in good standing are structured as follows:

- Enrolls at least five youth from three different families between the ages of five and 18.
- · Selects youth officers such as president, vice president, secretary and treasurer to provide leadership to the club.
- · Is advised by adult staff or certified volunteers who have been screened and trained in accordance with the North Dakota 4-H Policy and Procedure Handbook.
- Conducts yearly meetings, supplemented by project meetings, camps, fairs and other 4-H hands-on learning experiences and opportunities.
- Meets in any location a home, community center, military installation, library, public housing site, school, barn and/or any other place that creates a safe environment.
- · Helps youth and parents/guardians adapt in cases of mobility — linking them to 4-H programs.
- · Meets the interests and needs of youth to explore their passions and illustrates intentional diversity of project areas and other interests through positive youth development.

If these components can no longer be maintained, clubs must work with NDSU Extension staff to develop a plan to return to good standing or dissolve the club entirely. For dissolvement protocols, see Procedure for 4-H Clubs Procuring, Storing and Dispersing Funds.

6.5 Club Members

As an organization, youth join 4-H, and the adult volunteers are approved to serve as leaders to create a safe environment for learning through effective youth-adult relationships. As part of a high-quality 4-H experience, youth are required to perform the following:

- Enroll in 4-H Online.
- · Select 4-H project areas for focused, in-depth learning and engagement, typically over the course of the program year.

- · Record what they learn (record books).
- Attend meetings regularly and be active participants.
- · Complete community service projects (either individually or as a group).
- Participate in some form of public presentation.
- Have exhibits evaluated (usually part of 4-H) Achievement Days or a county fair).

The 4-H council and/or club may have additional 4-H club member expectations and responsibilities. Examples may include fees to be paid, additional expectations and involvement such as meeting a minimum required attendance at meetings, etc.

6.6 Club Operational Requirements

The club agrees that it will at all times remain a 4-H club in good standing with NDSU Extension through their Extension county office and will operate in a manner consistent with the North Dakota 4-H charter, Policy and all other requirements for 4-H clubs, including financial protocols and other items updated annually. The club abides by policies and practices required by NDSU Extension and maintains relevancy as documents are updated. Failure to follow such requirements, policies and practices may result in revocation of 4-H club's charter and/or this agreement. Revocation of the 4-H charter results in disbanding and dissolving the 4-H club in its entirety, losing all rights and privileges bestowed on the club by NDSU Extension to use the 4-H Name and Emblem.

6.7 4-H Club Constitution and Bylaws





4-H clubs must function formally through a constitution and bylaws. These are organizing documents of a club and describe how the club operates. A constitution outlines the fundamental principles and structure of the 4-H club and/or 4-H council, while bylaws provide detailed rules and procedures for its day-to-day operations. A current copy of the club Constitution and Bylaws must be kept on file in the Extension county office. The 4-H Club Constitution and Bylaws template is a guide to assist 4-H clubs with providing structure around the club's name/ identity, mission and purpose, membership, officers' duties and terms, meetings, fiscal operations, use of club revenue and dissolution.

6.8 Club Name

Any organization that has been chartered to further 4-H objectives and programs and has been formally authorized through the charter application process to use the 4-H Name and Emblem by NDSU Extension can establish a club name and serve as an official representative of the Cooperative Extension System. Club names are to be specific to the 4-H club or organization, either through a unique name or by identifying the county or location [such as "Bison Buddies 4-H Club" (unique name) or "Cass County 4-H Horse Club" (generic name with county)].

Club names cannot be the following:

- Offensive or generally seen as demeaning to any group protected by equal opportunity regulations.
- · Overtly religious or representing the beliefs of one denomination over another.
- Implying that membership is limited or exclusive.

Refer to the Naming 4-H Clubs, Units, Programs, Events and Websites from the 4-H National Headquarters Fact Sheet.

6.9 Club Finances

Handling of money at the club level must comply with the North Dakota 4-H guidance under Financial Management and Federal Policy. For the in-depth club-specific finance and tax policy outlining requirements and protocols, see the Finance Policy for 4-H Councils and Clubs section.

Clubs must maintain an active status in 4-H Online and be officially chartered to have and raise any money in the name of 4-H. In addition, IRS 990 filing (Form 990, Form 990EZ or Form 990N) and Secretary of State filing are external forms that must be completed annually by Sept. 15 of each year.

6.9.1 Dissolution Clause

In accordance with laws governing nonprofit organizations, if a 4-H club disbands, all funds in the club treasury and any other property can only be given to another 4-H nonprofit organization, such as the local 4-H council or the North Dakota 4-H Foundation. The funds do not go to individual members of the club.

6.9.1.1 Dissolution Clause to be **Included in Club Bylaws**

Upon dissolution of the 4-H club, the members agree that all real property — including money, equipment and land — shall become the property of a recognized 4-H club or group with the approval of the local 4-H council and the Extension county agent responsible for 4-H. The last official duty of the club's organizational leader shall be to transfer club property and club records to the NDSU Extension office.

6.9.1.2 Disbanded Club Asset **Disposal Procedure**



The 4-H club shall be terminated and dissolved by a simple majority vote of the membership in favor of dissolution and termination of the 4-H club. The members shall also vote on how to disburse club resources for a project, activity, or contribution to the betterment of the county 4-H or state 4-H program.

When a 4-H club dissolves or fails to reorganize without a vote of the members, the resources become the property of the local 4-H council or the North Dakota 4-H Foundation after a waiting period of one year. During the one-year waiting period, the account will be maintained by the treasurer of the local 4-H council.

Upon dissolution and termination of the 4-H club for any reason, the officers shall take complete account of the 4-H club's assets and liabilities. They shall liquidate the assets and apply and distribute the proceeds therefrom in the following order:

- 1. To the payment of the debts and liabilities of the 4-H club.
- 2. To set up any reserves that the officers may deem reasonable and necessary for any contingencies of unforeseen liabilities or obligations of the 4-H club. Such reserves shall be paid over by the treasurer to an escrow account designated by the officers to be held to distribute such reserves and payment of any such contingencies at the expiration of such period as the officers of the 4-H club may deem advisable.
- 3. To another 4-H club (such as the local 4-H council or North Dakota 4-H Foundation) for program development directly related to the enrichment of the quality of life of 4-H youth and volunteers. This remaining balance can be given to any 4-H organization and/or a percentage to all.
- 4. (In the event that the local 4-H council or the North Dakota 4-H Foundation does not qualify for funds

or does not exist at the time of dissolution and termination of the 4-H club) To the local 4-H council or North Dakota 4-H Foundation accounts (must be different from the organization mentioned above).

Secure documentation and file it at the county office for the club file, verifying the closure of the bank account.

Each member shall be furnished with a statement prepared by the 4-H club setting forth the assets, liabilities and distribution upon complete liquidation. Upon compliance with the foregoing terms and manner of distribution, the 4-H club shall cease.

6.9.2 Transferring a 4-H Club Between Counties

A 4-H club seeking to transfer from one county to another must submit a formal proposal to the 4-H Council of the originating county, with notification to the county's Extension agent. The proposal must include the following:

- 1. A statement outlining the reason for the transfer.
- 2. A report of the club's current finances and assets.
- 3. Signatures from all active 4-H club members, indicating agreement with the transfer.

Additionally, the proposal must include signatures from the 4-H Council president and the county's Extension agent where the club wishes to transfer from, confirming that discussions have occurred and the transfer has been accepted.

The club's original charter will remain with the club following the transfer. The receiving county will assume administrative oversight of the club upon final approval. Any outstanding financial obligations or disputes must be resolved prior to the transfer.

6.10 Club Programs and Activities

In accordance with NDSU Extension requirements, the 4-H club endeavors are to provide a variety of learning experiences and to conduct programs and activities that further the purposes and objectives of 4-H. The 4-H club will provide NDSU Extension information regarding meetings, programs and other activities. NDSU Extension may send representatives to observe such programs, meetings, events and activities necessary to meet its obligations.

4-H focuses on positive youth development by balancing personal responsibility with educational opportunities. Deadlines are crucial for the smooth operation of

programs, helping to manage the workload for Extension staff and volunteers while maintaining a welcoming environment for all. Meeting deadlines ensures that programs and events run smoothly, effectively and fairly. Additionally, deadlines help to ensure judges are wellprepared for success. Understanding and adhering to deadlines helps youth and families develop valuable skills such as attention to detail, time management, reflection and goal-setting.

4-H members and their families are responsible for meeting all deadlines and requirements for participation in events, contests, 4-H Achievement Days, county fairs and other 4-H-related programs. Extension county staff, the 4-H council and 4-H club leaders must work to ensure regular communication is provided to 4-H families on the deadlines, policies, rules and requirements for participation.

6.10.1 Program and Activity **Deadlines Best Practices**



Deadlines are an essential part of running an organization. Properly communicating deadlines gives participants and staff the appropriate amount of time to interact with registration materials and other preparations. Below is a list of best practices for communicating deadlines:

- Communicate the deadline in advance of the official deadline: Ensure the deadline is communicated and understood at least two weeks before the deadline.
- Use multiple communication channels: Utilize various platforms like email, social media, newsletters and flyers to ensure the message reaches a broader audience.
- Document methods of deadline communication: Record usage of social media posts, newsletters, emails, flyers and meetings. Include the date the communication was sent.

- Send reminders: Schedule reminder messages at key intervals leading up to the deadline, such as one week before, three days before and the day before.
- Highlight the deadline prominently: Make the deadline date and time stand out in communications through bold text, larger font sizes or distinct colors.
- Provide clear instructions: Offer detailed guidance on what needs to be submitted by the deadline and how participants can complete their submissions.
- Include a call to action: Encourage prompt action with clear and motivating language, such as "Register now!" or "Don't miss out!"
- Use countdowns: Implement countdowns in digital communications and event websites to create a continual visual representation and sense of urgency.
- Acknowledge submissions: Send confirmation messages when submissions are received to assure participants their information has been successfully submitted.
- Offer support: Provide contact information for assistance in case participants encounter issues or have questions about meeting the deadline.
- Tailor communication: Adjust messaging to cater to different audiences, such as early birds versus lastminute registrants, to better address their needs and behaviors.
- Update regularly: Keep the event website and related platforms updated with current deadline information to prevent confusion.
- Clarify consequences: Clearly state the implications of missing the deadline, whether it is higher fees, limited availability or loss of opportunity.
- Use visual aids: Employ graphics, calendars and infographics to visually communicate the save the date, deadline and related timelines.

7. 4-H Council Structure A

A 4-H council is a collaborative body of 4-H volunteers that works closely with the Extension county office to ensure the effective implementation and operation of 4-H programs. Its primary role is advisory and administrative, focusing on the broader strategy and direction of 4-H activities in the county.

Youth involvement is vital to the 4-H council. The 4-H program is for youth, so allowing them to have a voice, a vote and representation is essential. Youth membership on the council and committees, as well as serving as officers, is required.

7.1 Essential Functions of a **4-H Council**

Successful 4-H councils work in conjunction with NDSU Extension to plan and implement meaningful activities for participants. This arrangement results in the creation of quality county-wide youth development programming.

The 4-H council serves as a local group of elected representatives who provide guidance, solicit support and assist in carrying out programs and activities in the interest of the 4-H Youth Development Program. The 4-H council is comprised of volunteers interested in promoting positive youth development and representing the demographics, delivery modes and project areas they serve. Their input, fundraising and interaction help to ensure that 4-H provides the educational programs needed for the area.

4-H council members must act in the overall best interest of all young people. They must attend 4-H council regularly and committee meetings, volunteer at 4-H events and activities and support the final recommendations and decisions of the 4-H council. The 4-H council operates under the leadership of the local 4-H NDSU Extension staff.

The primary functions of the 4-H council are resource development, policy support, program advisory and advocacy.

Resource Development

Specific functions related to resource development in cooperation with local Extension staff are the following:

- Develop and manage a 4-H council budget to support the planned program.
- · Lead and support fundraising activities to reflect the planned budget.
- Provide resources to those contributing/participating to the 4-H Youth Development Program (youth, volunteers, partners).

Policy Support

Specific functions related to policy support in cooperation with local Extension staff are the following:

- Establish local policy for the 4-H program when not determined by state or national regulations.
- Provide input to interpret and enforce policy issues when relevant.
- Support the 4-H staff responsible for carrying out policy.

Program Advisory

Specific functions of the 4-H council related to program advisory in cooperation with local Extension staff are the following:

- Ensure comprehensive youth development programming that includes all delivery methods, based on the needs of youth and families in the county. Programs must be based on the needs and interests of young people and the developmental stages of youth.
- Participate in efforts to assess and clarify youth and community needs.
 - Connect with 4-H clubs to gain input.
 - Establish priorities of interest.
 - odentify, set and manage goals for the 4-H council and encourage 4-H clubs to do the same.
- Help identify, plan and implement program delivery methods to reach and support youth needs. Examples may include the following:
 - Workshops/clinics
 - Guest speakers

- Camps
- Collaborative social events with other 4-H clubs
- Community-based programs
- Risk Management: While risk generally cannot be eliminated entirely, it can be managed in such a way that it is at a minimal, acceptable level. The primary goal of 4-H Youth Development is to provide a safe environment where youth thrive — developing skills, building relationships and experiencing the joy of learning.
- Equal Opportunity: The 4-H council must ensure the county 4-H program provides all youth equal access and opportunity in compliance with federal laws and regulations.

Advocacy

The 4-H council works to promote the many different and exciting 4-H opportunities that are available to youth. Program visibility is ultimately a link to the future 4-H program success. Specific functions related to advocacy, in cooperation with local Extension staff, are the following:

- Inform others about 4-H council decisions.
- Advocate for 4-H Positive Youth Development and NDSU Extension.
- · Identify ways to include and support the community through a 4-H club.
- Work with NDSU Extension staff to design informal community gatherings to encourage new 4-H members and volunteers.
- · Encourage others to share their talents, skills and careers with participants to stimulate career exploration and investing in the future generation of leaders.

7.2 4-H Council Membership Process 🗹 📶





Membership in the 4-H council is a yearly process. The image, selection and recruitment phases will clarify potential members' expectations and establish the climate in which they will work. Orientation, continuing education and recognition are essential determinants of the individual's effectiveness as a 4-H council volunteer. The 4-H council constitution and bylaws must explain the selection process.

When recruiting new 4-H council members, consider the following:

- 1. Image: A compelling community image is the key to enhancing the effectiveness of the comprehensive 4-H Youth Development Program when attracting crucial leadership. Envision and cultivate an organization rooted in the principle of prioritizing the well-being of the youth in this county as the future workforce and generation of leaders. This imagery forms the foundation that a 4-H council must strive to build upon and develop.
- 2. Selection: Opt for candidates who harbor a genuine interest in fostering positive youth development and represent the county or area. Seek individuals who showcase strong leadership capabilities, have different talents to share with the youth and represent a diverse career platform.
- 3. **Recruitment:** Provide an overview of the 4-H council philosophy and role to orient and inform candidates to serve on the 4-H council. Highlight the goals, achievements and projects undertaken by the 4-H program throughout the year.
- 4. Orientation and Continuing Education: Provide training on thriving youth development programming, the 4-H council goals, current programs and operating procedures. In addition, provide volunteers a chance for personal growth and development through participation.
- 5. **Recognition:** Give thanks for a job well done.
- 6. Rotation: Opportunities for the 4-H council volunteers to experience different roles for the regular rotation of new members. The rotation of membership brings fresh ideas and enthusiasm for a strong youth program. Some counties utilize term limits to ensure new perspectives on their councils. A 4-H council must consider adopting term limits into its bylaws.
- 7. **Conclusion:** The 4-H council term must be clearly understood. Experiences on the 4-H council must lead to further opportunities to serve youth and the community.

7.3 4-H Council Member **Enrollment**

4-H council members are required to enroll as volunteers in 4-H Online. This includes signing the North Dakota 4-H Code of Conduct and completing a proper volunteer screening.

For more details about volunteer screening, see the Volunteer Registration Process section.

7.4 4-H Council Fund Procurement, Storage and **Dispersal**

A significant function of the 4-H council is to secure resources (financial and otherwise) to conduct highquality educational programs. 4-H councils must be good stewards and are publicly accountable for funds. For complete requirements and protocols around the procurement, storage and dispersal of funds by a 4-H council, see 4-H Councils Procuring, Storing and Dispersing Funds.

7.5 Council Resource **Development Tips and Protocols**

- · Volunteers are well-suited for raising funds in support of the 4-H Program.
- · Private donors and public decision-makers are interested in the needs and interests of the members of their community.
- Private donors carefully listen to people who live, work and volunteer in their community.
- Donors will be more likely to give funds to programs or groups that ask for it, have a well-developed financial plan, have goals set and have a reputation of being fair, community-minded and well-organized.
- Members of the 4-H council must consider giving a personal gift to the 4-H program before asking others to contribute.

8. 4-H Youth Protection Policy 🛆

NDSU Extension is committed to creating a safe environment for youth to reach their full potential as capable, competent and caring citizens. As staff members, volunteers, youth or adults, everyone who works closely with young people has the potential to profoundly affect the well-being of youth. In addition to providing safe and appropriate environments, NDSU Extension affiliates must also be positive role models, focusing on communication with youth, supportive behavior guidance, collaborative problem-solving and sensitivity to the individual needs of youth. 4-H aims for positive youth development that builds personal responsibility for the care of self and others while addressing risks beyond the participant's control. The primary purpose of the Youth Protection Policy is to ensure the safety and well-being of all youth participants, their families, volunteers and staff. The following list of policies is required to be upheld for all types of 4-H events happening in the state of North Dakota or the name of North Dakota 4-H (such as an out-of-state awards trip held by a county 4-H program).

8.1 Youth Protection Policy

NDSU Extension 4-H Youth Development is dedicated to providing a safe, supportive, and enriching environment for all participants. To uphold this commitment, the Youth Protection Policy outlines essential rules for staff and volunteers, ensuring proper supervision, ethical conduct and the well-being of youth. This includes maintaining appropriate adult-to-youth ratios, adhering to the Code of Conduct and following mandatory reporting procedures to protect against abuse or neglect. Additionally, the policy establishes expectations for safe environments, antibullying efforts, appropriate electronic communication, incident reporting, youth transportation and other critical items to keep young people safe. By prioritizing these standards, North Dakota 4-H promotes learning, growth and safety for all.

8.1.1 Staff

This policy applies to all Extension staff regardless of work assignment.

8.1.2 Volunteers

In North Dakota, volunteers with the NDSU Extension are considered unpaid staff when they officially function on behalf of NDSU Extension, granting them the opportunity to teach. All volunteers working directly with youth are required to be screened and trained every 3 years and enrolled annually in 4-H Online. One-time volunteers, such as judges or presenters, who are under the direct supervision of an enrolled and approved 4-H volunteer or Extension professional, do not need to be screened. Potential volunteers cannot assume responsibilities and be enrolled as volunteers until the screening and approval process is complete.

For more details about volunteer screening, see Volunteer **Registration Process.**

8.1.3 Teen Members and Teen Employees

Youth who turn 18 at any point during the 4-H year and continue to serve in roles where they regularly interact with younger members (such as camp counselors, teen teachers or assistants) are required to complete the adult volunteer screening process. This ensures the safety of all participants and supports a smooth transition from youth member to adult volunteer.

Additionally, youth who seek employment in programs that involve overnight responsibilities (such as camping or chaperoning) must follow the full employee hiring procedures, as outlined by NDSU Extension.

8.2 Code of Conduct

Youth and adult volunteers must sign the Code of Conduct, which communicates behavioral expectations.

8.3 Supervision



There will be a minimum of one Extension staff, approved chaperone or screened 4-H volunteer serving as the responsible adult for every eight youth ages five to seven years old and for every 10 youth age eight and older for any NDSU Extension youth-related activities that may involve an overnight stay. The youngest responsible

adult must be at least three years older than the oldest participant. At least one adult must always be within sight or hearing distance of youth. A nonrelated adult can never be in an area alone with a youth at any time.

It is encouraged that the chaperones reflect the gender of the youth present.

For the safety and protection of both youth and adults, an adult can never be alone in a room with a youth. This is a best practice rooted in youth protection policies designed to prevent misunderstandings, reduce the risk of harm and uphold the highest standards of accountability and trust. Whenever possible, ensure that interactions occur in open, observable and interruptible spaces, and that two adults are present when working with youth in private or enclosed areas. These measures help create a safe, transparent environment for everyone involved.

For guidance about supervisors and youth, see 4-H Volunteers section.

8.4 Adults Working One-on-One with Youth

While spending time alone with a single youth can be positive and helpful, it can also be a reason for concern for everyone involved. For the protection of everyone, volunteers and staff need to work with young people in reasonably open places where others are welcome to enter (not behind closed doors). Adults must avoid placing themselves in situations where they are alone with an unrelated young person.

Parents and guardians are always welcome and encouraged to attend NDSU Extension youth program meetings and events.

8.5 Reporting Abuse or Neglect

Extension-paid staff are required to report child abuse through NDSU Form PB404 (Form J). Paid staff and volunteers must be alert to the physical and emotional well-being of youth under their supervision. Signs of injury or suspected child abuse or neglect must be reported to appropriate NDSU Extension staff (for example, a county volunteer needs to report to the Extension county agent as all Extension staff are mandatory reporters).

Reporters mandated by state law are all Extension paid staff as well as most medical staff, school professionals,

teachers and administrators, counselors, social workers, child care workers, law enforcement officers and clergy. Mandated reporters who suspect child abuse or neglect and fail to report that suspicion can be charged with a class B misdemeanor.

8.6 Anti-bullying

Bullying behaviors by youth, volunteers and/or staff are prohibited. NSDU is committed to providing a climate that fosters respect for all who participate in its programs and activities. As part of that commitment, NDSU prohibits bullying in all forms and works to prevent bullying in programs and activities.

Bullying behavior is defined as unwanted, deliberately negative actions by another individual or group of individuals with intent to harm. Bullying may inflict distress, including physical, social, sexual, psychological or educational harm, on the targeted individual or group. Bullying includes an imbalance of power between individuals/groups. Bullying may include but is not limited to, verbal aggression, emotional attacks, sexual harassment, racial discrimination, physical aggression, isolating others or electronic harassment.

Electronic harassment, also known as cyberbullying, is bullying that happens through text messages, social media, instant messaging, chat rooms or any other electronic mode.

8.7 Anti-hazing

Hazing incidents are cause for immediate dismissal of youth and adults. 4-H supports positive youth environments and, as such, disavows any initiation activities, hazing, hoaxes, discriminatory jokes and any other ways that place youth in an unsafe mental or physical environment.

8.8 Romantic Relationships

Romantic relationships between adult volunteers and youth members are strictly prohibited to maintain appropriate boundaries and ensure youth safety. Additionally, while peer relationships among youth are a natural part of development, all interactions must align with the values of respect, inclusion, and well-being. This policy sets clear expectations to protect youth, uphold integrity, and create a positive environment where all participants feel safe and supported.

8.8.1 Relationships Between Adult Volunteers and Youth Members

It is inappropriate to the role of a 4-H adult volunteer to engage in a romantic relationship with a youth member at any time. Any adult volunteer engaging in a romantic relationship with a member has violated this policy. Any violation of this policy will result in the immediate dismissal of the adult volunteer.

North Dakota 4-H cannot monitor and enforce this policy outside of 4-H activities, nor is North Dakota 4-H responsible for doing so. However, all adult volunteers must be aware that 4-H policy prohibits them from engaging in a romantic relationship with a youth member at any time, both during 4-H activities and outside of 4-H activities. Any violation of this policy will result in the immediate dismissal of the volunteer.

8.8.2 Relationships Between Youth Members

All romantic relationships between members are the responsibility of the youth and their parents/guardians. However, if such a relationship is apparent to 4-H staff and/or adult volunteers, these adults must pay particular attention to enforcing the Code of Conduct.

8.9 Physical Punishment

Extension staff and volunteers will not, under any circumstances, discipline youth by use of physical punishment or by failing to provide the necessities of care, such as food and shelter.

8.10 Nondiscrimination **Policies**

Using the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and subsequent legislation, Extension volunteers and paid staff must not show discrimination in designing or delivering programs on the basis of age, color, disability, gender expression/ identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, public assistance status, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation or status as a U.S. veteran. Those representing Extension must make sure programs are equally accessible to anyone desiring to participate. They must use all reasonable efforts to ensure that anyone who has not participated before feels welcome.

Including diverse participation brings new perspectives and experiences that enrich learning and develop life skills necessary to live in a multicultural society.

Definitions:

- Discrimination Different or unequal treatment of an individual (or group), based on one or more of the protected classes (see definition below) of the individual (or group), except as where permitted or required by law. that negatively affects their education, employment or other participation in educational programs or activities.
- Equal opportunity Employment or educational practices that seek to ensure non-discrimination on the basis of protected classes (see definition below).
- Harassment A form of discrimination; unwelcome oral, written, graphic or physical conduct, based on one or more of the protected classes (see definition below) of an individual (or group), that is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive so as to unreasonably interfere with their education, employment, or other participation in educational programs or activities or that creates a working, learning or educational program or activity environment that a reasonable person would find hostile, intimidating or abusive. Harassment may include, but is not limited to, threats, physical contact or violence, offensive jokes, insults or put-downs, slurs or name calling, vandalism/graffiti or offensive objects or pictures. Petty slights, annoyances and isolated incidents (unless very serious) typically do not rise to the level of harassment.
- Protected activity Activity which may include, but is not limited to, filing a discrimination and/or harassment complaint, reporting discrimination and/or harassment or participating in a discrimination and/or harassment investigation.
- Protected classes For NDSU's purposes, protected classes are those related to: age, color, gender expression/identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, physical or mental disability, pregnancy, public assistance status, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, spousal relationship to current employee, status as a U.S. veteran or participation in lawful activity off NDSU's premises during nonworking hours which is not in direct conflict with the essential business-related interests of NDSU.
- Retaliation Intimidation, harassment, reprisal or other adverse/unfavorable action taken against an individual (or group) in response to their protected activity, which could include, but is not limited to, filing a discrimination and/or harassment complaint, reporting discrimination and/or harassment or participating in a discrimination and/or harassment investigation.

- Sexual misconduct A broad term encompassing all forms of gender-based harassment or discrimination and unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature. The term includes sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, nonconsensual sexual contact, nonconsensual sexual intercourse, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, stalking, public indecency, intimate partner violence, sexual violence and other misconduct based on sex.
- Title IX Federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance.

Visit the NDSU Equal Opportunity and Title IX compliance website for more definitions. To file a complaint or a report, visit this website: https://www.ndsu.edu/equity/about.

8.11 Alcohol and Illegal Drug Use

Adults working in Extension youth programs must be positive role models for participating youth. Adults must obey state laws and the organization's rules. Extension strives to help youth make good choices by modeling healthy behavior; therefore, alcohol, tobacco or nicotine use in any form (including e-cigarettes, vapes, chewing or other nonsmoking products) will not be allowed at 4-H events.

The influence of alcohol or illegal drugs can inhibit reasonable judgment and reduce the ability to provide a safe environment for youth. The liability coverage carried by NDSU will not offer protection to an employee or volunteer who violates state or local laws or ordinances concerning alcohol or illegal drugs.

Since the consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs is not acceptable for young people in Extension youth programs, adults will not consume these substances while working with youth. Any Extension volunteer or paid staff can be liable both criminally and/or civilly if underage drinking associated with an Extension youth activity is condoned, ignored or accepted. Adults must recognize and continue to help communicate the powerful and adverse health and safety consequences of drug and alcohol use.

8.12 Institutional Support in Crisis

In some circumstances, the Extension county agent, district director or state Extension staff may deem it necessary to involve additional institutional support. The following offices may be brought in at the discretion of Extension staff and with the support of the state director:

- · Risk management officer
- · General counsel
- Title IX coordinator
- Campus security personnel

8.13 Electronic Messaging



Adults who work with youth must use institutional or group (rather than personal) social media accounts to communicate with youth involved in the program. Adults must communicate/message with groups of youth rather than private messages.

For more information about messaging and social media use, see Social Media Best Practices and Social **Expectations.**

8.14 Food Preparation and Serving

Food and food products must be kept in safe and sanitary conditions. North Dakota state law regarding the preparation and serving of food must be followed at all times.

Further information about North Dakota law can be found at North Dakota Food Code: A Guide for Food Handlers.

"Cooking for Groups: A Volunteer's Guide to Food Safety" is an Extension publication about general food safety for volunteers.

8.14.1 Food Accommodations



It is strongly recommended that when food will be prepared or served as a part of any 4-H event, all participants are consulted ahead of time on any relevant food allergies and that appropriate accommodations are made (i.e., to accommodate a person with a peanut allergy, an alternative nut butter may be provided. For a peanut dust allergy, there could be a no-peanuts-on-site rule or clear signage posting allergy information on the entrance).

Other food accommodations may be for cultural customs or religious reasons.

8.15 Incident Reporting



Prompt and accurate reporting helps maintain a safe environment and ensures appropriate support and followup when needed.

8.15.1 Incident Definition

An incident is defined as an injury event of any degree, including near-miss incidents, in which no property was damaged and no personal injury was sustained, but where damage or injury could have occurred, given a slight shift in time or position.

8.15.2 Obligatory Reporting

Extension staff and volunteers are required to report all incidents.

8.15.3 Types of Incident Reports

There are three types of incident reports that may need to be filled out. The nonemployee incident report or the NDSU employees/near-miss report must be filled out for every incident. An additional American Income Life Insurance report does not need to be filled out for all incidents but must be for any 4-H incident involving medical bills.

8.15.4 NDSU Student. Visitor or **Property Damage Incident Reporting**



In an emergency, call 911 to summon emergency medical support as soon as possible. Give the location and condition of the individual. Respond to any questions from the operator. If on the NDSU campus, immediately report the incident to the University Police and Safety Office (701-231-9587).

Complete and submit the online non-employee incident report to the Safety Office, as incidents must be reported within 24 hours.

The injured student or visitor may seek medical care if they feel it is necessary at the medical provider of their choice.

Get the name and address of the injured person and the hospital, if possible. Be prepared to assist the staff in preparing and completing any required incident reports.

8.15.5 NDSU Employee Incident Reporting/ **Near Miss/Workers' Compensation**



Assess for first aid or medical treatment.

Report the incident/event immediately to a supervisor. Supervisors assess hazards and conduct an investigation. Identify corrective actions to prevent similar incidents from occurring: repair, replace, remove or retrain/train.

Complete and submit the online employee incident report immediately to the Safety Office, as incidents must be reported within 24 hours. For incidents that happen in remote areas, report as soon as possible. Information may be taken over the phone to piece together a timely initial incident report.

If medical care is needed, let the designated medical provider know this is a work-related injury and that North Dakota Workforce Safety Insurance (WSI) is North Dakota's workers' compensation provider.

Gather and keep all medical documentation, including the First Report of Injury form and information relating to any work restrictions from the medical provider.

Immediately contact the NDSU loss control and claims specialist (701-231-9587) to complete additional required workers' compensation paperwork and provide copies of all documents from medical care.

Employees are required to follow medical restrictions 24/7, not just during work hours. The supervisor must monitor the employee's return to work and provide temporary accommodations for restrictions. Employees are required to accept modified work.

Keep the NDSU loss control and claims specialist informed of all referrals, restrictions and visits. Remember to sign and date all documentation.

8.15.6 North Dakota 4-H Accident and **Illness Insurance**

North Dakota 4-H, through its state 4-H office, carries an accident insurance policy for all enrolled members and enrolled adult volunteers. The policy is with American Income Life Insurance. Accident insurance aims to supplement the person's primary health insurance policy to cover some expenses not covered by their primary policy.

Special activity coverage may also be obtained by Extension county offices to provide accident and illness coverage for 4-H activities. This coverage is obtained per event.

8.15.6.1 Filing a Claim



If an incident occurs during a covered program/event, it is essential to act quickly.

If an accident/incident needs medical attention, complete the Claim Form as completely and accurately as possible. The form must be completed by the staff or a volunteer unrelated to the patient. The form has detailed instructions, including the documentation needed to proceed. Ensure the special activities coverage serial number is included if this was pulled. A PDF of the form is available online.

The North Dakota 4-H Policy number is A ND50163. The serial # is the number associated with the Special Activities Policy pulled for the individual event. This would be an extra insurance component pulled by the Extension agent. If special activity coverage was not pulled as additional coverage, leave the serial # blank.

Eligible medical statements must be provided within one year from the treatment date.

The policy name is North Dakota 4-H Youth Department Program.

Claim reports must be sent directly to American Income Life and must be filed within 24 hours of the incident if possible. The claim must be provided within 20 days from the date of the activity to be covered. Claim forms or itemized bills may be emailed to claimssrd@ailife.com. The mailing address is as follows:

P.O. Box 50158 Indianapolis, IN 46250

Even after the initial claim report has been submitted, communication between the AIL SRD Office and the Policy Holder (4-H) is essential. Make sure to keep open lines of communication and follow up with requests as soon as possible so that participants are not left with unpaid bills.

8.16 Mandatory Reporting Guidance

The safety and well-being of youth in NDSU Extension 4-H Youth Development Programs are top priorities. Below is our guidance on mandatory reporting obligations for staff and volunteers in accordance with the North Dakota Century Code (NDCC) and NDSU policies.

Mandatory Reporting Requirements

Under the North Dakota Century Code (NDCC 50-25.1), certain individuals, including educators, youth program staff and volunteers, are legally required to report suspected child abuse or neglect. The law states that any person with knowledge or reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect must report it to the appropriate authorities.

Who is a mandatory reporter?

- NDSU Extension employees who work directly with youth in any capacity
- · 4-H volunteers working directly with youth in any capacity.

Reporting Responsibilities

Mandatory reporters must report suspected child abuse or neglect immediately. Failure to report can result in legal consequences under North Dakota law. Proof is not required — a reasonable suspicion is sufficient to make a report. Reports must be made to the following organizations:

- North Dakota Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Hotline: 1-833-958-3500
- Local law enforcement: If immediate danger is suspected
- NDSU Title IX Office: If the concern involves an NDSU-affiliated individual

Training Requirements

NDSU Extension employees who consistently work directly with youth in any capacity must complete annual training on child abuse recognition and reporting procedures.

4-H volunteers must complete mandatory child protection training before being approved as a volunteer.

All participants must adhere to NDSU's Youth Protection Policy and the 4-H Code of Conduct.

The North Dakota Training (https://mandatedreporter. pcand.org/courses/educators-course/) training includes six lessons and takes approximately an hour to complete. This training includes some quizzes. There are a few included videos in some lessons to watch. Once completed, download a certificate of completion.

Mandated reporters website:

https://mandatedreporter.pcand.org/

The North Dakota Mandatory Training is required upon initial employment or during the initial screening process for 4-H volunteers. This training is required to be taken every five years.

Reporting Process

- 1. Recognize: Identify signs of potential abuse, neglect or endangerment.
- 2. Report: Contact the appropriate authority listed above — do not investigate or attempt to confirm details.
- 3. Document: Record the report for internal purposes (date, time, nature of concern and where it was reported).
- 4. Follow up: If necessary, cooperate with investigating authorities while maintaining confidentiality.

Confidentiality and Protection

Reports can be made confidentially. North Dakota law protects reporters from retaliation if the report is made in good faith.

Ongoing Compliance and Support

4-H professionals and volunteers should regularly review policies and participate in refresher training. If in doubt about a situation, always err on the side of reporting — it is better to make a report that is unfounded than to miss an opportunity to protect a child.

For additional guidance or questions, contact the NDSU Extension Administration.

8.17 Motor Vehicles, **Machinery and Equipment**

The use of motor vehicles, machinery, and equipment in 4-H activities must follow strict safety protocols to prevent accidents and injuries. This policy provides clear protocols on the appropriate use, supervision, and operation of these tools, aligning with state and national safety standards.

Anyone involved in 4-H events must adhere to these protocols to create a safe learning environment. Whether participating in hands-on agricultural experiences, operating machinery under supervision or utilizing vehicles for transportation, undergoing proper training, following age-appropriate restrictions and complying with laws are essential. By following these procedures, 4-H ensures that young people develop responsible skills while prioritizing safety in every activity.

8.17.1 Operation of Vehicles

Volunteers and paid staff must operate vehicles safely, using common sense and good judgment, following operating procedures and obeying traffic laws (including using seat belts). Overloading vehicles or using vehicles not designed to transport multiple passengers is unacceptable.

8.17.2 Youth Transportation

Anyone who transports youth to participate in Extension youth program activities and events must possess a valid motor vehicle operator's license.

All drivers must be in compliance with North Dakota traffic laws, including but not limited to possessing a valid driver's license, having adequate insurance, wearing a seat belt and abstaining from texting while driving.

Youth may not drive passengers to out-of-county 4-H/ Extension events without written permission from the parents/guardians of the driver and passengers.

Youth who drive to an event must receive documented permission from the Extension agent or adult in charge to continue using the vehicle during the event.

It is required that any vehicle used to transport 4-H members is maintained so that it is safe and reliable for the conditions, weather and distance at which it is to be driven.

8.17.3 Automobile Insurance

Volunteers must rely on their own automobile insurance policy for protection when working in an Extension youth program. It is recommended that all Extension volunteers and paid staff review their personal property liability coverage and consider a personal and family umbrella liability policy.

Volunteers must also have liability insurance coverage to meet North Dakota state law. Refer to the North Dakota Department of Insurance website for the coverage and minimum limits mandated by law.

8.17.4 State Fleet Vehicles

A state fleet vehicle is a viable option for a screened and approved 4-H volunteer to use for transportation. The largest state fleet allowed is a 12-passenger vehicle.

To reserve a state fleet vehicle, visit the NDSU Facilities Management website and/or contact NDSU Motorpool.

The rental price may vary depending on the requested vehicle. Contact the NDSU Motorpool at ndsu. motorpool@ndsu.edu to identify costs.

State fleet policy requires all users to fuel state vehicles at North Dakota Department of Transportation district facilities and/or University fueling sites.

There are advantages to renting a fleet vehicle. The operator decreases wear and tear, mileage and risk of damage to their personal vehicle. There is also access to various types of motor vehicles for conducting official business.

For 4-H youth or 4-H adult volunteers to use an NDSU state fleet vehicle, they must request a volunteer to operate the vehicle by filling out this SFN59000 form from NDDOT. The form must be submitted at least one week prior to the reservation date.

The NDSU staff responsible for the trip must submit an Authorized Academic Use of State Fleet Vehicles form. The form must be signed by the district director and assistant director for 4-H youth development and forwarded to NDSU Motorpool.

When state fleet vehicles are not in active use, it is highly recommended that they are parked in secure areas such as an NDDOT lot or a courthouse. When a state fleet vehicle is reserved, indicate to state fleet officials where it will be parked. Refer to the North Dakota State Fleet Services Policy Manual for additional requirements and guidance around state fleet vehicles.

8.17.5 Personal Vehicles

Counties with limited access to state fleet vehicles may use personal vehicles if their supervisor (such as the district director) authorizes their personal vehicle for the use of NDSU state business. When using a personal vehicle for work-related travel, there is a potential for liability coverage, which must be settled with a supervisor's written approval before using the vehicle in an official capacity. Liability coverage is not guaranteed.

When NDSU Extension employees start, it is implied that some positions use a personal vehicle if there is limited access to the state fleet.

8.17.6 Passenger Vans

NDSU Extension prohibits the use of 15-passenger vans for transportation of youth participating in NDSU Extension programs due to the risk to occupants during certain driving conditions.

8.18 Ensuring a Safe Environment in the Presence of a Registered Sex Offender

The NDSU Extension 4-H Youth Development Program is committed to providing all participants a safe and inclusive environment. While all citizens have the right to live and work in the community, North Dakota law does not prohibit low- or moderate-risk sex offenders from residing near schools, parks or daycare facilities unless explicitly restricted by probation conditions. If the 4-H program is open to the public, then it is the sex offender's responsibility to follow the guidelines related to exclusion zones. NDSU Extension agents and 4-H volunteers are not law enforcement officers and may not always be aware of a registered sex offender's presence at an event. However, if questionable behavior occurs or someone makes others uncomfortable, immediately contact law enforcement by calling 9-1-1 rather than directly engaging with the individual.

North Dakota Sex Offender Website: https://sexoffender.nd.gov/offender.

By implementing these proactive steps, NDSU Extension employees and volunteers can maintain a safe and welcoming environment while adhering to North Dakota laws and policies. When in doubt, consult NDSU Extension leadership, local law enforcement or legal counsel before making decisions.

1. Understand the law and local restrictions

In North Dakota, registered sex offenders are assigned a risk level by a team of professionals:

- Low risk: Required to register for a minimum of 15
- Moderate risk: Required to register for 25 years.
- High risk: Required to register for life and may not reside within 500 feet of a public or nonpublic school.

Some offenders may be legally prohibited from attending youth events, while others may not have such restrictions. To ensure compliance, consult local law enforcement or check local regulations and court orders.

2. Consult local authorities and Extension leadership

If a registered sex offender's attendance at a 4-H event becomes known, local law enforcement can be contacted.

If concerned, request a law enforcement presence at the event.

If a registered sex offender must attend as a legal guardian, consider arranging for law enforcement officials to monitor the event to help maintain a safe environment.

3. Establish clear boundaries

If a registered sex offender must be present due to legal guardianship, the following guidelines must be enforced:

- · They must remain in designated areas.
- They may not volunteer or supervise any youth activities.
- They must check in and out with a designated staff member.

4. Restrict involvement when necessary

If an individual's presence poses a risk or makes youth or families uncomfortable, employees and volunteers have the authority to deny participation in accordance with state and local policies.

Notify a supervisor and document the situation immediately.

5. Relocate events to safer spaces when needed

If a registered sex offender is known to be involved in an event location (e.g., a parent, guardian or community member), consider moving the event to a venue where they are legally prohibited, such as a school building, community center or church with child protection policies.

Public schools often have policies restricting registered sex offenders from being on-site without prior administrative approval. Check with the school administration for their specific policy.

6. Limit direct contact and enforce supervision protocols

Volunteers and employees should never be alone with a registered sex offender during a 4-H event. Always ensure multiple adults are present in any interaction.

If a registered sex offender is a parent or guardian and legal restrictions prohibit their presence around youth, inform them that they must drop off and pick up their child but may not remain on-site.

7. Train staff and volunteers

All volunteers and staff should read through this short document as awareness training on handling such situations professionally and legally.

Reinforce the importance of reporting concerns to 9-1-1 and their supervisors rather than attempting to address the situation independently.

Guidance: Parents Who Are Registered Sex Offenders Attending 4-H Events

North Dakota 4-H recognizes the importance of family involvement in a child's 4-H experience. At the same time, 4-H is committed to ensuring a safe and welcoming environment for all youth. If it comes to your attention that a parent or guardian attending 4-H activities is a registered sex offender, please follow the steps below with clarity. compassion and consistency.

Step 1: Initial Phone Call to the Parent

Reach out to the individual privately by phone. The caller's tone should be calm, respectful and factual.

Share that it has been brought to attention that their name appears on the North Dakota Sex Offender Registry and that they have been attending 4-H events with their child.

Ask if this is accurate to ensure the information is not a reporting error.

If they confirm it is not accurate, kindly encourage them to contact their local law enforcement or the North Dakota State Police to correct the registry if needed.

If they confirm they are a registered sex offender, thank them for their honesty and calmly explain the following guidelines, which are intended to prioritize child safety while supporting their right to be present for their own child.

Step 2: Guidelines for Parent Interaction at 4-H Events

Explain the following clearly:

- Parental rights are respected: They are allowed to accompany and support their own child at 4-H events, meetings and activities.
- Limited involvement: They may not assist with, supervise or interact with any other child. Example: If a child next to them spills a drink or needs help, they should not intervene — even to clean up. This ensures clear boundaries and compliance.
- Know and follow the law: It is their responsibility to be fully aware of and follow any legal restrictions, including exclusion zones, related to their status.
- No events at their residence: Regardless of their presence or involvement, no 4-H or NDSU Extension programs, events or meetings may be hosted at their home or any property listed on the registry.

Step 3: Written Follow-up

After the conversation, send a follow-up letter on official letterhead and retain a copy in a secure file for documentation.

Sample Letter Language:

DATE

Dear [Name],

This letter serves as documentation of our phone call on [Date] at [Time]. During that call, you confirmed that you are listed on the North Dakota Sex Offender Registry and that you are the parent of a youth who participates in the North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program.

As discussed, you may accompany and support your own child during 4-H-related activities, programs, events, and meetings. However, you are not permitted to supervise, assist, or interact with any other youth. It is your responsibility to understand and comply with the laws related to your status as a registered sex offender. including restrictions on location and proximity.

In accordance with our policy, no 4-H or NDSU Extension activities may be hosted at your place of residence, regardless of your presence.

We appreciate your cooperation and commitment to ensuring a safe environment for all youth.

Sincerely,

[Staff Signature] [Staff Title] [Contact Information]

8.19 Health Forms

Health forms may be required for specific events. They must be completed for each participant for situations where the youth is away from home overnight or activities that might cause concern about the safety of the youth. Adult volunteers or paid staff must have these forms available if youth need emergency medical treatment. Health forms are available from Extension county offices.

Prior to the event, adult volunteers or paid staff must review the health forms to be aware of potentially lifethreatening health conditions.

8.20 Program-specific Safety **Policy**

Each program has specific rules for members to participate safely.

8.20.1 Equine Helmet Policy

All young people who participate in any mounted horse activity in North Dakota 4-H are required to wear a properly fitted American Society of Testing Materials/ Safety Equipment Institute-approved harness helmet. This certification is noted by a label permanently attached to the inside shell of the helmet. Such headgear will be secured with the harness engaged and be properly fastened when mounted on a horse.

8.20.2 Shooting Sports Program **Certification Requirement**

The North Dakota 4-H Shooting Sports Program is committed to the following:

- Promoting the highest standards of safety, sportsmanship and ethical behavior, including sound decision-making.
- Teaching safe and responsible use of firearms and archery equipment, self-discipline and concentration.
- Encouraging participation in natural resources and related natural science programs by exposing participants to the content through shooting, hunting and related activities.

Due to the nature of the program, shooting sports has a comprehensive policy located across two key resources located in the contest folder for shooting sports on the North Dakota 4-H Google Drive: Shooting Sports and Shooting Sports Policy and Risk Management.

Shooting sports instructors must be at least 18 years old, a certified 4-H volunteer and certified by attending a 4-H state training to conduct shooting sports activities. Instructors must be certified in the discipline in which they work. Certified instructors are to conduct instruction, run the range, manage other volunteers and manage risk management. The discipline certification period is six years for active instructors and two years for inactive volunteer renewals.

Full program details can be found on the NDSU Extension 4-H Shooting Sports web page.

9.4-H Privacy Policy 🛆

North Dakota 4-H is sensitive to the need to protect the privacy of youth under 19. As a result, personal or identifiable information for anyone under age 19 will not be collected without providing a parent with the information and having parental permission.

9.1 Web Postings

In compliance with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, no one under the age of 19 will be required to disclose more information than is reasonably necessary to participate in the activity as a condition of participation. 4-H will not post identifiable information of a 4-H member on a website as per the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998, which protects children under 13.

9.2 Confidential Information

The North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program protects the confidentiality of the names and personal information of 4-H members and volunteers. No commercial or unauthorized use is made of its members' names, addresses or other confidential information. Access to this information is strictly limited to the North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program as per the Confidentiality Statement

9.3 Media Releases

A signed release statement is required to use a 4-H member's name or photos in any 4-H publication, ad, display, news release or website. Parents/guardians of a 4-H member must update this release statement annually as part of the re-enrollment process. A print version is available in the appendix. 4-H Online has guidance on how to run a report for county media releases.

9.4 Consent to Participate in Statewide Impact Studies

Youth may be asked to voluntarily participate in program evaluation to assess the positive impacts gained from 4-H participation. Evaluations are voluntary, and youth can refuse to participate or withdraw any time without harming their relationship with researchers, NDSU or the 4-H program. Complete consent statements are available by request from the state 4-H office.

For official verbiage, see the list of agreements in the appendix.

9.5 File Management

Effective file management is essential for maintaining accurate records, ensuring compliance and supporting the smooth operation of North Dakota 4-H programs. Proper organization, storage and security of files — both digital and physical — help protect sensitive information, improve efficiency and facilitate seamless program reporting.

All staff, volunteers and program leaders are responsible for following best practices in file management, including timely updates, secure storage and adherence to retention policies. By maintaining well-organized records, 4-H enhances transparency, accountability and the overall success of youth development efforts across the state.

9.5.1 Access to Files

All Youth Protection Policy information on volunteers/ paid staff must be kept in a secure place, accessible only to the authorized NDSU Extension personnel and/or designated personnel committee working with this policy implementation.

However, according to North Dakota open records laws, information — except from the North Dakota Child Abuse Information Index — about any youth program volunteer or paid staff must be available if requested.

Information from the North Dakota Child Abuse Information Index cannot be made available to anyone except authorized NDSU Extension personnel or committee members.

10. Media, Social Media and Messaging Use 🛕

Media includes print, publications, ads, displays, news releases, websites and social media. Social media and messaging have revolutionized communication, offering dynamic ways to engage with youth. These tools can significantly enhance communication between volunteers and program participants, fostering stronger connections and providing timely support. However, it is essential to recognize the potential impacts on young people's development and to carefully consider safety and privacy when using these methods.

10.1 Media Release Protocols

NDSU Extension personnel and volunteers must adhere to the following:

- Always obtain permission before sharing photos and ensure media releases are on file.
- · Only use the first name and last initial of the youth when identifying them. Never use their full name.
- Youth in foster care or other protected situations must never be identified, even by first name, unless explicit, case-by-case permission is obtained through the proper legal channels.
- Remember that online information is permanent and can spread quickly.
- Do not distribute complete participation lists (including full names, ages and contact info).
- Avoid posting when unsure about something.

NOTE: Any foster youth cannot have any images or names shared on social media (see the North Dakota Foster Care Provider Handbook).

10.2 Social Media Best **Practices**



Social media is a powerful tool for promoting North Dakota 4-H, celebrating youth achievements and engaging communities. To maintain a positive and safe online presence, all 4-H members, volunteers, and staff

must follow best practices that align with 4-H values and policies. This includes respecting privacy, using appropriate language and images and representing the program in a professional and inclusive manner.

By following these, 4-H's digital presence can remain safe, respectful and aligned with the mission to empower youth and strengthen communities.

10.2.1 Friending/Following Youth **Participants or Volunteers/Parents**



NDSU Extension personnel and volunteers must establish firm boundaries from the beginning and explain their social media use if necessary.

When deciding whether to connect with others on social media, NDSU Extension personnel and volunteers must consider the potential display of personal information, photos and opinions. They must reflect on the nature of their relationship with the person and the possible implications of being connected on social platforms. Questions to consider include the following:

- · What will youth/volunteers/parents/guardians see on the personnel's/volunteers' social media account?
- What might Extension personnel/volunteers see or learn about the youth/volunteer/parent/guardian, or participant?
- What is the Extension personnel's/volunteer's intent or purpose in connecting with the youth/volunteer/ parent/guardian?
- What are the potential consequences?

10.2.2 Sharing Information on Social Media



NDSU Extension personnel and volunteers are advised to use good judgement about sharing information on social media:

- · Be cautious when posting and avoid blanket statements or venting frustrations online.
- Ensure those involved are comfortable with any shared content.
- Always obtain permission before sharing photos and ensure media releases are on file.

- Remember that online information is permanent and can spread quickly.
- When unsure about posting something, leave it out.

NDSU Extension personnel and volunteers are required to address program concerns directly with their superiors rather than posting them online.

Any danger must be reported to authorities immediately and communicated to local personnel. Concerning behavior observed online must be communicated to the youth's parent or guardian.

If sharing photos, NDSU Extension personnel and volunteers must ensure media releases are on file and cannot share identifying information about youth participants. NDSU Extension personnel and volunteers must not tag youth directly, but are not responsible if others do.

Volunteers must notify their local NDSU Extension personnel if they create a social media presence for their group, and it is recommended that they make it a closed group.

10.3 Messaging with Youth

While texting and direct messaging may be preferred by youth, using group texts or messaging is required in order to avoid unintended consequences.

- NDSU Extension personnel and volunteers must set up group communication methods like reminder apps, Google groups, Facebook group chats or group texts.
- Ensure all participants can access the chosen communication platform.
- Confirm with participants and parents if texting is acceptable.
- Encourage youth to share only what they are comfortable with.
- Remind youth to be kind in their comments, as they might not say the same things face-to-face.

Volunteers are required to avoid private communications with youth. Instead, they must use group texts or messages, including parents, whenever possible. If a private conversation is needed, ensure that one other individual is present in that conversation as a witness to what is said.

Any danger must be reported to authorities immediately, followed by informing local personnel.

Volunteers must include NDSU Extension personnel or the minor's parents for direct communication with the minor. During trips/events, volunteers must use a group text for all participants, including chaperones. A common place for communication mitigates miscommunication and provides an opportunity for timely communication and understanding.

10.4 Further County Policy **Development Considerations**

To ensure a positive and secure environment, policies must address the following considerations:

- Privacy and confidentiality: Establish clear protocols on protecting participants' personal information and maintaining confidentiality in all communications.
- Appropriate boundaries: Define appropriate boundaries for interactions between volunteers and youth to prevent misconduct or inappropriate behavior.
- Digital literacy: Educate volunteers and participants on safe and responsible social media and texting practices, promoting digital literacy and critical thinking.
- Parental involvement: Encourage transparency and involve parents or guardians in communications to ensure they are informed and supportive of the interactions.
- Monitoring and accountability: Implement monitoring mechanisms to oversee communications and hold volunteers accountable for adhering to established protocols.

By integrating these essential considerations into policy, a 4-H club can harness the benefits of social media and messaging while prioritizing safety and well-being.

11. 4-H Volunteers

Volunteers play an essential role in fulfilling the mission of 4-H: to create supportive learning environments where youth and adults can reach their full potential as capable, competent and caring citizens. Volunteerism is integral to the success of 4-H, and the dedication of volunteers is highly valued.

Volunteering offers the opportunity to share expertise, learn something new, make community connections and develop new skills. This perspective helps maintain a safe environment and uphold the mission and integrity of the North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program.

11.1 Volunteering for Less Than One Day

When contributing and supporting 4-H in any capacity (such as being a speaker or camp volunteer) for less than one day, contributors are required to fill out a release of liability form (Volunteer Waiver) to yield any legal recourse against NDSU as the result of an incident on its property.

11.2 Volunteer Registration **Process**

All volunteers working directly with youth are required to be screened and trained every 3 years and enrolled annually in 4-H Online. One-time volunteers, such as judges or presenters, who are under the direct supervision of an enrolled and approved 4-H volunteer or Extension professional do not need to be screened. Enrolled 4-H members who turn 18 years old must also be screened.

To complete the North Dakota 4-H volunteer certification, volunteers must complete the North Dakota 4-H Youth Protection Volunteer Screening Requirements.

Once the volunteer has successfully been screened and has completed the state training modules and the NDSU Extension agent has approved the volunteer, staff may approve the volunteer in 4-H Online.

11.2.1 Suitable Volunteers



The county NDSU Extension agent has the authority to decide whether or not a person is suitable to serve as a 4-H Youth Development volunteer and has the final say to accept or reject a volunteer application.

11.3 Volunteer Recertification

To ensure volunteers continue to meet the standards for volunteering with 4-H, volunteers must undergo a recertification process every three years. Volunteers who are both NDSU employees and county employees will be recertified every six years (NDSU policy will take precedence). The Extension county staff will initiate the recertification process. To be recertified, volunteers must complete the North Dakota Youth Protection Volunteer Rescreening Checklist.

Once the volunteer has successfully been rescreened and completed the state training modules and the NDSU Extension agent has reapproved the volunteer, staff may reapprove the volunteer in 4-H Online.

Being a 4-H volunteer is a privilege, not a right. While volunteerism is crucial to the success of 4-H, it is an honor to help invest in future generations. Volunteers reflect the mission and vision of North Dakota 4-H. They must adhere to the North Dakota 4-H Policy and Procedures Handbook at all times to uphold the integrity of the 4-H program. This perspective helps maintain a safe environment and uphold the mission and integrity of the North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program.

11.4 Volunteer Orientation and Training Requirements



Volunteers are required to be informed about key 4-H policies. Therefore, volunteers must perform the following:

- Complete the North Dakota State 4-H training online orientation and training modules.
- Complete any additional training specific to the role or required by the county.
 - This may include shooting sports or chaperone training.

- This may include helping 4-H volunteers understand opportunities within the 4-H program (i.e., committees to serve on, events, fundraising goals, program goals, calendar of events, etc.), their roles and how they can be supportive.
- Participate in ongoing learning and professional development opportunities to enhance their skills and knowledge. Training will be offered by the state and county staff.

11.5 Reporting Criminal Charges



All 4-H volunteers are required to report criminal charges to the Extension agent immediately. Volunteers will be immediately suspended when facing criminal charges, and reinstatement cannot be considered until criminal charges are resolved.

11.6 Personal Insurance



Volunteers are required to have their own insurance, and any incidents will be assessed individually by NDSU's risk management team. While some incidents may be covered, volunteers must complete a nonemployee incident report (see Incident Reporting) in the event of an accident. An NDSU employee will submit this report online via DocuSign.

It is essential to document the roles and responsibilities of those working with youth programs in writing before any accidents occur. Extension volunteers and paid staff must keep records of activities and plans through written programs, meeting minutes, personal notes, letters, memos, annual reports, position descriptions and rosters. This documentation is essential for supporting insurance claims and helping to clarify the injured individual's responsibilities at the time of the incident.

All individuals must act reasonably and prudently when working with youth programs. This means acting as others with similar training and background would in the same situation. Negligence occurs when a person fails to meet this standard. Volunteers and staff must use this document to understand their obligations and responsibilities in promoting the well-being of youth in Extension programs.

11.7 Chaperones

NDSU Extension is dedicated to the positive development of North Dakota youth and families. Active and caring chaperones are essential to the success of the work with youth.

A chaperone is an approved 4-H adult volunteer at least 18 years of age who is enrolled and approved in 4-H Online. The chaperone is responsible for supervising youth at a 4-H event or activity. The event usually lasts more than 24 hours with an overnight stay and often involves travel. However, this may include a one-day camp, a single-day field trip or support for an after-school program.

11.7.1 Additional Screening for Chaperones

Volunteers are required to sign the Adult Chaperone Expectations for 4-H and Other Youth Events and complete the mandatory state online training modules prior to chaperoning.

11.7.2 Chaperone Ratios | Youth-to-Adult **Supervision Ratios**

Ensuring appropriate youth-to-adult supervision ratios is a critical component of delivering safe, high-quality youth programming. These ratios are designed to protect the well-being of youth, maintain compliance with risk management standards and promote meaningful learning experiences where young people feel seen, supported and safe. Supervision must always be proactive, engaged and aligned with the type of activity, location and age of participants.

The following chart outlines minimum required ratios based on youth age and activity risk level. These ratios reflect guidance from national organizations such as the American Camp Association (ACA), USDA/NIFA 4-H Youth Development and best practices across land-grant university Extension systems.

Age of Youth	Standard Ratio (Youth: Adult)	Water Activities Ratio (Youth: Adult)
5-8 years	6:1	4:1
9-14 years	8:1	6:1
15-18 years	10:1	8:1
All ages (overnight events)	8:1 minimum, with at least two unrelated adults present	Same as above, with lifeguard required

11.7.3 Additional Safety Protocols for Water and High-Risk Activities:

- A certified lifeguard must be present for all swimming, boating or other water-based activities.
- At least one adult must serve as an active designated watcher from shore or poolside — this adult must not be in the water.
- Buddy systems are required for youth during water activities.
- Ratios must be further reduced (e.g., 2:1 or 3:1) when working with the following:
 - Nonswimmers or participants with limited swimming ability
 - High-risk water environments (e.g., rivers, lakes, paddleboarding, whitewater)
 - Youth requiring specialized support or accommodations

11.8 Discipline, Dismissal or Suspension of Volunteers

Occasionally, a 4-H adult volunteer may fail to complete required training, act in a manner detrimental to the best interests of North Dakota 4-H or violate the <u>Code of Conduct</u> and NDSU policies. In such situations, or if a volunteer is not demonstrating a positive youth development approach, the county NDSU Extension agent has the authority to dismiss from specific events and suspend or remove the volunteer at any time.

11.8.0 Volunteer Communication Protocol Prior to Formal Review

Before initiating a formal review or issuing a written letter of concern or dismissal, Extension county agents must make reasonable efforts to first engage the volunteer in a verbal conversation. This should be done through a phone call or in-person meeting to:

- · Discuss observed concerns or behaviors.
 - Have these documented and written out
 - Have a witness to also listen to the conversation
- · Clarify expectations and applicable policies.
 - Have the above paired with a specific policy that was not followed
- Allow the volunteer an opportunity to share their perspective.
 - Set up a time to meet
 - Ensure you are communicating with your district director
 - If you would like your grievance committee to be involved in this step, that is acceptable

This conversation should be documented (date, time, summary) and serve as a first step toward resolution whenever possible.

Note: There are circumstances where the severity of the situation justifies immediate suspension or dismissal without prior conversation. However, these must remain the exception rather than the norm.

Why this matters:

Volunteers are essential to the success of North Dakota 4-H, and many give years of service with limited recognition. A fair and professional approach that begins with respectful dialogue reinforces trust, reduces miscommunication, and encourages positive change before escalation is necessary. This also ensures agents don't act unilaterally or prematurely in a way that could be perceived as punitive, selective or power-driven.

11.8.1 Formal Review Process for Suspension/Dismissal



- The Extension county agent will advise selected relevant personnel and appropriate individuals of the upcoming formal review, but will otherwise keep this information confidential to the greatest extent possible.
- 2. Relevant personnel may include, but are not limited to, the district director, the assistant director, the state volunteer specialist, North Dakota 4-H staff and others as needed to review the 4-H adult volunteer appointment.
- 3. At the discretion of the Extension county agent, the adult volunteer may be suspended from North Dakota 4-H participation in part or in full during the formal review period. The Extension county agent may specify the parameters of the suspension as they deem appropriate (partial suspension).
- The Extension county agent will review the 4-H adult volunteer appointment and follow the outlined steps (see the Volunteer Conflict Resolution Appendix).
- 5. The Extension county agent will issue written notification to the 4-H adult volunteer of the review of their appointment. Such a notification will include the following:
 - a. Citations of specific concerns and/or policy infractions (to include dates/timeline/and specific details).
 - Statement of immediate and/or possible outcomes, including possible termination as a 4-H adult volunteer (must include specific consequences within the letter).
 - c. If applicable, notice of the improvement plan (see appendix) or mutually agreeable resolution plan and timeline that the 4-H adult volunteer will complete to correct the problem.

The appropriate state-level personnel shall be consulted in the process and copied on the letter.

1. If, after the agreed-upon timeline, the Extension county agent determines that the 4-H adult volunteer's actions were unsatisfactory and failed to remedy the situation, and/or if the problem reoccurs anytime thereafter, the district director will follow the outlined protocols (see the Volunteer Conflict Resolution Appendix).

11.8.2 Exception to Formal Review Process (i)



On an exception basis, the Extension county agent can immediately suspend or dismiss the 4-H adult volunteer. Examples of situations in which the review process might be waived would include extreme disruption to the North Dakota 4-H program, a potential threat to public safety. a notice that the 4-H adult volunteer is charged with a criminal offense and/or other conditions that cannot be remedied with corrective action.

In such a situation, the Extension county agent will follow the steps for immediate suspension or dismissal outlined in the Volunteer Conflict Resolution Appendix without resorting to the review process. Due process procedures will not apply in such instances and may not be accessed by the 4-H adult volunteer.

11.8.3 Recording Removal of Volunteer



When a 4-H adult volunteer is terminated, the county must log the information and report it to the state 4-H office to document the information of the terminated volunteer.

It is highly recommended that counties keep individual logs of dismissed/terminated volunteers within their county in addition to the state log. This log must be hosted in a secure place and passed on to subsequent Extension agents in the county. The log must document the following:

- The full name of the dismissed/terminated volunteer. including any other legal names
- Date of dismissal/termination
- · Reason for dismissal/termination
- Copy of dismissal/termination letter when available

11.8.4 Recourse



A 4-H adult volunteer who feels that their termination was made on an improper basis has the opportunity for recourse and can submit an appeal letter. The dismissed/ terminated volunteer may write a letter to the state 4-H office outlining their claim for recourse, the policy that they were alleged to have violated, their official letter of dismissal and a \$200 check, which will be returned if they are exonerated or retained if the decision remains unchanged. The claim will be adjudicated by the state

4-H director, a grievance committee and the appropriate district director.

Inquiries regarding NDSU's nondiscrimination policies may be directed to this address:

Equal Opportunity and Title IX Compliance North Dakota State University NDSU Dept. 2000, PO Box 6050 Fargo, ND 58108-6050

11.9 Limitations of the **Authority of Volunteers**

Volunteers may not sign contracts of any kind on behalf of NDSU nor otherwise obligate NDSU in any way. Likewise, 4-H clubs, 4-H councils and other 4-H groups are prohibited from entering into contracts on behalf of NDSU.

In the present-day business environment, virtually all contractual transactions result in the parties' assumption of risk. When volunteers enter directly into business contracts, they may become personally responsible for the associated liability.

All agreements with outside organizations, agencies and individuals must be executed by an authorized NDSU Extension employee (starting with the Extension county agent) and comply with all applicable NDSU policies and procedures governing the particular transaction. Observance of this restriction protects volunteers and ensures that NDSU Extension's American Income Life Insurance Policy may be applied as appropriate.

In this specific context, "volunteers" means all people involved in North Dakota 4-H who are not NDSU employees — including, but not limited to, chaperones, volunteers and parents/guardians — who are officially screened, have signed appropriate paperwork and are enrolled in 4-H Online.

In this context, "contracts" means all business agreements including, but not limited to, facilities use agreements, rental and lease agreements, employment contracts, consulting and construction contracts.

Exemption: In working closely with the county NDSU Extension agent, some grants, fundraising agreements and/or service-learning agreements might be acceptable as long as they uphold the mission of 4-H and involve 4-H youth development components. These are ultimately at the discretion of the Extension county agent — it is the volunteer's responsibility to ensure they are aligned with the appropriate Extension county agent prior to making agreements.

12. Accessibility △

Fostering belonging and inclusivity is a key part of the 4-H mission. Ensuring that all events, activities, programs and communications are accessible to people of all abilities is essential. This section outlines the core accessibility requirements that 4-H must provide, along with additional recommendations and best practices for successful implementation.

Reasonable accommodations are adjustments or modifications to enable individuals with disabilities to participate fully in an activity, program or event. These can include physical changes to the environment, providing assistive technologies or offering alternative formats for communication.

Accessibility means creating an environment where all individuals, regardless of their abilities, can access and benefit from 4-H programs and services. This includes physical accessibility, such as ramps and accessible restrooms, as well as ensuring that information and activities are accessible to people with various disabilities.

Accessibility is about creating a landscape that all people can comfortably interact with, whereas accommodations are specific tools used to make particular instances more accessible.

Accessibility is about respecting individuals of all abilities, and any actions taken to improve accessibility must be conducted with kindness, respect and inclusivity.

12.1 Youth with Disabilities and Nondiscrimination

All 4-H programs are federally mandated under the Americans with Disabilities Act (1991) to ensure that all programming is accessible to persons with disabilities. This means that all 4-H programs must be designed to consider and meet the needs of participants with disabilities or other needs. Reasonable accommodations must be made to allow those with diminished access to participate. Extension staff must review and, if appropriate, adjust program teaching methods, subject matter content and meeting places and times to ensure accessibility of programs.

12.1.1 Public Disclaimer



All flyers and materials/content must contain the following statement, which is required by federal law and the NDSU Policy:

NDSU does not discriminate in its programs and activities on the basis of age, color, gender expression/identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, participation in lawful off-campus activity, physical or mental disability, pregnancy, public assistance status, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, spousal relationship to current employee, or veteran status, as applicable. Direct inquiries to Vice Provost, Title IX/ADA Coordinator, Old Main 100, 701-231-7701, ndsu.eoaa@ndsu.edu.

Requests for accommodations related to disability must be made to (local contact/event organizer) at (phone and email) by (date two weeks in advance of actual event).

Abbreviated versions cannot be used.

12.2 Inclusion

The policies and procedures are meant to ensure that no one excludes youth members. The North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program emphasizes youth development and educational experiences that promote safety, relationship building, youth engagement, community involvement, skill building and learning - for all youth.

12.3 Educational Goals

Policies, procedures and rules must relate to the educational goals of the North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program. Extension staff must examine policies, procedures and rules, especially those set at the local level, to ensure youth members are not arbitrarily excluded from the educational experience.

12.4 Accommodations

A reasonable accommodation is any change or adjustment to areas of participation that enables a person with a disability to have equal access and opportunity. A reasonable accommodation aims to eliminate barriers that prevent individuals with disabilities from performing tasks or participating fully in activities. These accommodations must not cause undue hardship or fundamentally alter the nature of the program or activity.

12.4.1 Definition of a Reasonable Accommodation



Characteristics of a reasonable accommodation include the following:

- Effective: The accommodation must effectively address the specific needs of the individual, allowing them to participate fully.
- · Feasible: The accommodation must be practical and implementable without causing undue hardship to the provider (such as excessive cost or significant difficulty).
- Tailored: The accommodation must be customized to meet the individual's unique needs rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach.
- Nondisruptive: The accommodation must not fundamentally alter the nature of the program or activity or compromise the safety and efficiency of the setting.

12.4.2 Making a Reasonable Accommodation





The following process outlines the recommended way for Extension staff to receive and create accommodations.

- 1. 4-H Accommodation Request forms (found in the Appendix) are publicly made available to all parents/ guardians/participants in the county and are provided in registration materials for events.
 - a. 4-H Accommodation Request forms are strictly confidential and must only be reviewed by staff responsible for preparing the synopsis. These must be stored in a secure filing system with other documents containing personal information.
- 2. A parent/guardian/participant fills out the form and gives it to Extension staff, or a parent/guardian/ participant alerts Extension staff of the need for accommodation without filing the form.
 - a. If the Extension staff receives a request for accommodation without a filled form, the staff will collaborate with the parent/guardian/participant to fill in a 4-H Accommodation Request form.
- 3. Extension staff who have received the request may consult resources or contact their district director or state volunteer specialist to discern potential accommodations.

- 4. A draft accommodation plan must be created which outlines the following:
 - a. **The need:** The underlying barrier to participation (i.e., participant needs a mobility aid to walk).
 - b. Findings: The implication for participation and the context. This section must elaborate on how the identified need(s) impacts the participant's ability to fully engage in the 4-H activity and list specific challenges (i.e., the participant may experience fatigue more quickly than peers without mobility aids, impacting their stamina and participation in more prolonged or more demanding activities).
 - c. What 4-H can do: This section must outline specific accommodations and modifications that 4-H can implement to support the participant's needs and ensure they can fully participate in all activities (i.e., plan activities with adequate breaks and rest periods to accommodate participants who may tire more easily. Provide comfortable seating and rest areas in all event locations.)
- 5. The draft accommodation plan is shared with the parents/guardians of the 4-H member for approval.
 - a. It is recommended that the Extension personally engage with the parent/guardian/participant to better understand the scenario and how to support the participant.
- 6. Once approved, a short accommodation synopsis must be prepared. The accommodation synopsis does not need to include a diagnosis or justification for why the accommodation exists.
 - a. Example 1: Asha may need to excuse herself to get a snack to maintain her blood sugar. Please make sure that she is able to step away from the group if she asks.
 - b. Example 2: Joe is nonverbal. He will have a helper during conference judging today. Please direct your questions to the exhibitor, but know that his helper will respond to help Joe communicate.
 - c. Example 3: Exhibitor 210 will be using a rolling AV cart to move their poultry from the barn to the show table.
- 7. The accommodation synopsis must be shared with event/activity management. The statement must not be needlessly shared beyond event/activity management and must, for instance, not be shared with all parents/ youth attending an event/activity.
 - a. Add an entry to the North Dakota 4-H Accommodation Repository to document the accommodation made - not required - will help others learn how you navigated a situation.

12.4.3 Resources for Discerning Reasonable Accommodations





There are multiple resources that can help someone discern what a reasonable accommodation may be. The following resources offer recommendations for specific scenarios, bearing in mind that reasonable accommodations must be tailored to the needs of the participant:

- Engage with the youth/parent/guardian to understand if they have any ideas about what reasonable accommodations may look like. In many cases, this is not the first time the participant has needed an accommodation and may have a good idea of what has worked well for them in the past.
- Consult the Job Accommodation Network (JAN), which lists different disabilities, scenarios and accommodations programs and workplaces have successfully made. JAN can be searched by disability, limitation, accommodation, work-related function (i.e., parking, noise) and topic.
- Consult the University of Minnesota Extension's Accessible for All Abilities webpage, Purdue University Extension's Inclusive 4-H page or University of Wisconsin Extension's Disability Self-Advocacy and Allyship Skills page, which all focus specifically on 4-H accessibility.
- Consult the North Dakota 4-H Accommodation Repository to see if there are similar instances.

12.4.4 Additional Event Support



Additional staff/volunteer/parent/guardian support may be advised in some scenarios to facilitate accommodations. Extension staff must consider the accommodation being granted if it requires an additional headcount to execute or if any special skill requirements are needed (i.e., being able to interpret American Sign Language). Staff may ask another staff, a 4-H volunteer or a parent/guardian of the participant to aid in facilitating the accommodations.

12.5 Recommendations for Building Accessible and Inclusive Spaces



Inclusive spaces are the foundations of building an accessible program that supports and creates belonging for all participants. The following section is focused on best practices in building an inclusive space.

12.5.1 Inclusivity Statement

Counties may adopt an official statement to their policies or communications. Below is an example statement:

(County name) 4-H is committed to creating a diverse, equitable, and accessible environment for all members, past, present, and future.

12.5.2 Inclusive Language

When talking with or about people living with a disability, person-first language is often the best place to start. Person-first language places the person before the disability and may sound like "person who uses a wheelchair" instead of "wheelchair user." Someone with a disability may prefer to be identified using identity-first language; this is often the case for people who determine it is a part of their identity and may sound like "deaf person" instead of "person with a hearing impairment."

It is best practice to defer to the preference of the person. Ask the person how they wish to be described.

12.5.3 Universal Design

Universal design is a proactive approach that removes barriers to inclusion, helps create a sense of belonging and enables everyone to thrive. Universal design aims to create inclusive and equitable spaces that accommodate everyone regardless of age, size, mobility, cognitive abilities or sensory capabilities. Universal design benefits all participants, not just those with disabilities. Ask, don't assume, what accommodations are most beneficial. Universal design approaches are the following:

- 1. **Equitable:** Useful and accessible to people with diverse abilities (i.e., having ramps available when needed).
- 2. Flexible: Adaptable to individuals' preferences and abilities (i.e., breaking directions into easy-tounderstand steps, designating a space for taking breaks).
- 3. Sensory-friendly: Clear to participants regardless of their sensory abilities (i.e., using closed captions, increasing font size, using picture schedules, providing fidgets).
- 4. Safe: Reduces the risk of accidents (i.e., providing handrails, setting clear boundaries outside).
- 5. Comfortable: Physically pleasant and requires minimal physical effort (i.e., having nearby seating).
- 6. Physically Accessible: Provides adequate space for different body sizes, postures and mobility devices (i.e., allowing space between tables for a wheelchair to move, offering seated and standing positions).

12.5.4 Digital Accessibility



Because accessibility is about building a landscape where all people can successfully interact, digital accessibility is crucial for ensuring that all 4-H participants can engage with online content and virtual events. This section outlines the best practices for making digital resources accessible.

12.5.4.1 Website and Online Content Accessibility

All online content and websites associated with 4-H must adhere to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines to ensure accessibility for individuals with disabilities. Key practices include the following:

- Perceivable information and user interface: Provide text alternatives for nontext content, create content that can be presented in different ways without losing information and make it easier for users to see and hear content (i.e., captioning a photo with a description of the image, captioning a graph with a description and key takeaways).
- Operable user interface and navigation: Make all functionality available from a keyboard, provide users enough time to read and use content and avoid content that causes seizures (i.e., offer an option to extend or disable time limits, no flashing content more than three times per second).
- Understandable information and user interface: Make text readable and understandable, make content appear and operate in predictable ways and help users avoid and correct mistakes (i.e., use simple language and explain complex terms, consistent navigation menus and expected behavior).
- Robust content and reliable interpretation: Maximize compatibility with current and future user tools, including assistive technologies (i.e., test on different browsers and devices).

12.5.4.2 Virtual Event Accessibility



Ensuring accessibility in virtual events is essential to provide an inclusive experience for all participants. Recommendations include the following:

- Captioning: Provide real-time captioning for all spoken content during virtual events (i.e., utilize Zoom captioning during virtual meetings).
- Sign language interpretation: Offer sign language interpreters for participants who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- · Accessible platforms: Use digital platforms that support accessibility features such as screen readers, keyboard navigation and alternative text for images.

• Participant support: Offer technical support to participants to help them access and navigate virtual events (i.e., have a volunteer designated to monitor the chat and answer questions).

12.5.5 Accessible Emergency Plans



Developing and implementing inclusive emergency procedures is vital to ensure the safety of all 4-H participants, including those with disabilities. This section details best practices for creating accessible emergency plans. Emergency plans must consider the needs of participants with disabilities to ensure their safety during emergencies. Key components include the following:

- Accessible emergency information: Provide emergency information in accessible formats such as large print, braille and easy-to-read versions.
- Evacuation procedures: Develop evacuation procedures that accommodate mobility impairments, sensory disabilities and other specific needs.
- Designated safe areas: Identify and clearly mark safe areas for participants who may need additional assistance during an emergency.
- Communication protocols: Establish communication protocols to ensure that all participants, including those with communication disabilities, receive timely and accurate emergency information.
- Individual emergency plans: Develop individualized emergency plans for participants with specific needs and ensure that staff and volunteers are familiar with these plans.

12.5.6 Additional Resources

- University of Minnesota's Accessible for All Abilities
- Purdue University's Inclusive 4-H
- University of Wisconsin's Disability Self-Advocacy and Allyship Skills
- Paths to Inclusion Resource Guide
- 4-H Program Leaders Working Group Youth With Disabilities
- North Dakota 4-H Different Abilities Webinar Series
- NDSU Accessibility Universal Design
- Iowa State University Topic-specific Flyers
 - Creating Space For All
 - The Law
 - Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
 - Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
 - Emotional and/or Behavioral Disorders
 - Learning Disabilities

13. 4-H Projects △

Project work is an integral part of the 4-H experience. A 4-H project is a topic or specific area of interest that excites a 4-H member. A 4-H'er will choose to explore and learn more about a 4-H project during the year, setting goals to plan what they will learn in each project area they enroll in. Youth usually participate in as many projects as they wish. However, consulting the county 4-H protocols is essential. Projects cover a wide variety of topics, such as welding, animals, sciences, robotics, fishing, flying drones and more. When youth bring these projects to the fair to show what they learned, these are called exhibits.

A 4-H project is made up of the following three types of activities:

- A. Hands-on activities, such as creating, producing, selling, practicing, observing, testing and interviewing
- B. Organized activities, such as performing demonstrations, public speaking, conducting workshops, organizing camps, county judging, working on project activities and preparing exhibits
- C. Leadership/Citizenship activities, such as conducting, planning, teaching, assisting, informing and organizing

4-H members take a project as either an individual or group project.

A short video on what a 4-H project is can be found here: https://youtu.be/Tw1z3qQV 6o.

When exhibited, all project work must have been completed within the past year and must not have been previously exhibited at a county fair/4-H Achievement Day. This ensures that projects reflect recent learning and growth, aligning with the focus on advancing skills and promoting thriving youth.

Definitions:

- Project area: A broad area of study over the 4-H year (such as Animal Science).
- Project: A narrow area of study under the larger project area (such as The Horse Project).
- Project sheets: These are sheets tailored to each project area that provide suggestions to explore different ways to exhibit at county fairs, 4-H Achievement Days and the North Dakota State Fair.
- Exhibit: An item or animal related to the project in which the 4-H member is enrolled.
 - Living exhibit: Examples of when a 4-H member participates in a living exhibit may include Communication Arts, Clothing Revue, Project Expo, 4-H Engineering and Design Challenge or Consumer Decision-Making contest.
 - Static exhibit: Static exhibits include items that are not moving or living. These items are on display in some form. For example, a welding project, a photograph, a flower arrangement, a custom-tooled leather halter or a baked item. They are somehow related back to the project area the 4-H'er is enrolled in.
 - Animal exhibit: These include living animals that are being exhibited, most often according to some breed standard. This may be a horse, rabbit or dairy cow. This may also include an animal in the pet project area.

The North Dakota 4-H Project Guide details all available projects and project areas for the 4-H year.

14. Animal Projects 🛕

The North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program is dedicated to promoting best practices in animal husbandry, ensuring the safety of both animals and participants and maintaining compliance with federal and state regulations. By adhering to these requirements, North Dakota 4-H aims to foster an environment of responsibility, clarity and excellence. The following protocols outline the necessary animal identification, ownership and care requirements for 4-H projects, contests and events, ensuring that all animals are properly identified, healthy and cared for. These measures are crucial for participating in 4-H activities and maintaining public health and safety standards.

14.1 Federal and State Requirements for Youth Working with Animals

In addition to the specific identification requirements outlined below, there are several federal and state regulations that 4-H participants must follow when working with animals. These regulations are in place to ensure the safety of the food supply, prevent the spread of diseases and promote animal welfare:

1. Animal Welfare Act:

- · Focuses on the humane treatment of animals in research, exhibition, transport and by dealers.
- Ensures standards, especially when exhibiting animals, are met.

2. Food Safety Modernization Act:

- · Focuses on preventing food safety problems before they occur.
- Ensures that the animals are raised in a manner that promotes food safety.

3. USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service regulations:

- · Focuses on specific transportation, identification and health certification of animals.
- · Ensures that animals are free from diseases and properly identified.

4. National Poultry Improvement Plan:

- Focuses on poultry health and disease control.
- · Ensures poultry originates from NPIP-certified flocks and tests negative for certain diseases.

14.2 Youth Quality Assurance **Policy Statement**



The North Dakota 4-H Youth Development program recognizes the crucial role of educating youth on producing animals that enter the food industry and are ultimately consumed by the public. Ensuring food safety, animal well-being, and ethical practices are fundamental to the mission of 4-H. As such, all youth participating in 4-H animal projects at the North Dakota State Fair are required to complete one of the following quality assurance programs: 1. Youth for the Quality Care of Animals (YQCA) or Livestock Quality Assurance (LQA).

14.2.1 YQCA and LQA Overview

Youth for the Quality Care of Animals (YQCA) is a national, multispecies quality assurance program designed for youth ages 8 to 21. The program, which can be taken online or in person, is focused on three key areas: food safety, animal well-being, and character development. Through annual education and certification, YQCA equips young producers with the knowledge and skills needed to be responsible and informed contributors to the agriculture and food industries. YQCA completion certificates are valid for one year.

Livestock Quality Assurance (LQA) is a Minnesotadeveloped program that focuses on animal well-being, ag advocacy, and broad animal health education. LQA is an in-person training that includes three hours of hands on education. Eligible trainings offered must be sponsored or hosted by NDSU Extension staff. LQA completion certificates are valid for three years.

14.2.2 Components of YQCA

- · Food safety
 - Basics of animal identification
 - Herd health plan
 - Biosecurity practices
- · Animal well-being
 - Daily animal care
 - Providing high-quality feed
 - Proper usage of animal health products
- Character development
 - Sharing the story of agriculture
 - Setting and achievement of goals
 - Upholding ethics in the show ring
- Agricultural Advocacy
 - Sharing the positive story of animal agriculture
 - Communication and public speaking skills
 - Networking and connecting with others

14.2.3 Certification and Impact

Completing a required training ensures that youth are knowledgeable about the critical aspects of food production, from safe animal handling to the ethical considerations of animal care. By earning a quality assurance certification, participants demonstrate their commitment to high standards in the agriculture industry, which is essential for showing at events such as the North Dakota State Fair.

For more information on the YQCA or LQA programs and to complete the training, visit the YQCA website or contact the local county NDSU Extension office.

14.3 Handling and Care of Animals

Animal owners are responsible for the welfare of their animals. They must provide adequate feed, water, bedding and housing for the comfort of the animals. Humane treatment of animals is required, and abuse will not be tolerated. Extension staff, volunteers and youth in leadership positions with Extension youth programs must teach youth appropriate animal care practices as part of the learning environment.

Youth with animal exhibits must read the state fair and county exhibit books annually for updates.

The International Association of Fairs and Expositions' Code of Show Ring Ethics must be followed for exhibitions, achievement days and fairs.

14.4 Animal Ownership

All animals must be owned or leased and actively managed by the 4-H member who is entering the project.

To ensure eligibility and transparency, all animals must be entered into the 4-H Online system by the designated animal ownership deadline — regardless of planned to be shown them or not. This is not a commitment to show the animal, but the first step in eligibility. ID'ing animals is required in 4-HOnline regardless of intent to show at the NDSF.

Even if a 4-H'er has a primary animal in mind, it's strongly recommended to add any potential backups (such as in the event of injury or illness). Only animals listed in 4-H Online by the deadline will be eligible for use in 4-H events or shows.

This policy is essential to upholding the educational purpose of the 4-H program. The ownership deadlines and documentation requirements are in place for the following reasons:

- Teach youth responsibility, long-term animal care, and project management;
- Promote fairness by preventing last-minute substitutions that could undermine the spirit of youth development (e.g., purchasing a high-value animal days before a show to gain a competitive edge);
- · Reinforce the importance of meeting deadlines, following instructions, and staying committed to a project over time;
- · Ensure consistency and trust in competition by verifying that all animals were under the youth's care and management for the required duration.

4-H animal projects are not just about winning they're about growing life skills, practicing integrity, and learning through experience. This system helps ensure every participant has a fair, meaningful opportunity to grow and succeed.

Ownership deadlines:

Market beef animals must be owned or leased, with managing control by the exhibitor, by Mar. 1 of the current year.

4-H members enrolled in an animal project must have managing control of their project animal(s) by May 1 of the current year. Animals may be owned, leased, rented or borrowed. If the animal is not owned by the 4-H member, the legal owner must provide a written statement confirming the member has managing control by May 1.

This requirement applies to all beef breeding animals. dairy, swine, sheep, horse and goat exhibits. Animals born after May 1 must be progeny animals that have been under the care and management of the exhibitor from birth.

An ownership date is not established for poultry and rabbits; however, exhibitors must have the animals in their possession a minimum of 30 days prior to the start of their county show or the opening day of the North Dakota State Fair, whichever is held first. A May 1 guideline is suggested for all rabbits and poultry, except for those that would not be of appropriate age at that time.

All livestock and equine (with the exception of young poultry and rabbits) that will be exhibited in 4-H must be entered in 4-H Online no later than May 1 of the current year.

Managing control may include, but is not limited to, regular interaction with their leased animal, participating in the training of the animal, contributing to feed and veterinary costs and taking an active role in setting nutrition protocols. This statement must be submitted to the

Extension office by May 1 and kept on file in the Extension office in the county of enrollment. A copy of this lease will be required upon check-in at the North Dakota State Fair.

A horse owned or leased by more than one 4-H'er may only participate once per age division in an event/class. If two youth own or lease the horse but are in different age divisions, both may use the horse for the same event/ class. Registered animals must be registered in the exhibitor's or family's name or have a lease on file in the local Extension county office and 4-H Online.

The same animal of any livestock species may be exhibited in one 4-H or FFA show only, regardless of joint ownership by 4-H and FFA members.

The Animal Lease Agreement for 4-H has the minimum requirements. Counties can add additional requirements if needed.

14.5 Animal IDs

Animal IDs are required for all animals at 4-H contests and recommended for all other 4-H events. The following section outlines specific requirements by animal.

North Dakota 4-H Livestock ID Requirements

BEEF PROJECT

Type of Beef	Birth Dates	ID Required for NDSF Participation
Breeding Heifer Calves or Yearlings	Varies by class	→ Individual Official USDA 840 ear tag
Cow/Calf (cow/calf pair)		→ Registration tattoo that matches the presented registration papers
Spring Bull Calf		(if registered)
Spring Steer Calf		→ Entered in 4-HOnline
Market Steers and Heifers, or Dairy Steers		

DAIRY CATTLE PROJECT

Type of Dairy Cattle	ID Required for NDSF Participation	
All Dairy	→ Individual Official USDA 840 ear tag	
	→ Registration tattoo that matches the presented registration papers (if registered)	
	→ Entered in 4-HOnline	

GOAT PROJECT

Type of Goat	Birth Dates	ID Required for NDSF Participation
Dairy Doe, Yearling, Milker or Dry	Varies by class	→ Ewes and rams official scrapies ID tattoo OR scrapies tag
Dairy Buck		*Breeds approved by USDA-APHIS-VS may use their 'breed
Market Wether	Born after December 1, 2024	registration tattoo' in lieu of a scrapie tag.
Meat Doe, Yearling or Two-year-old	Varies by class	→ Wethers require either an official scrapies ID tattoo or tag or an
Meat Buck		official USDA 840 ear tag (not required to be scrapies)
		→ Entered in 4-HOnline

HORSE PROJECT

Exhibiting Class	Birth Dates	ID Required for NDSF Participation
All Classes	Male foals may be shown, but yearling and older stallions are ineligible	→ Entered in 4-HOnline

POULTRY PROJECT

Exhibiting Class	Hatch Dates	ID Required for NDSF Participation
Poultry — All	 → Market poultry except market chickens – Suggested hatch of February 1 or later → Market chickens recommended to be shown at 7-9 weeks of age → Egg production chickens – Suggested hatch of February 1 or later 	 → Leg or wing band with ID number (likely will receive band at county fair) → ALL POULTRY MUST: Originate directly from an NPIP-certified flock OR Test negative to S. pullorum within 90 days prior to exhibitions OR Have been purchased from an NPIP source and be accompanied by a Poultry Exhibition Statement of Origin form (SRN 60329). → Optional to enter in 4-HOnline

RABBIT PROJECT

Exhibiting Class	Birth Dates	ID Required for NDSF Participation
Breeding Bucks and Does	Varies by class	→ Tattoo, Left ear
Fryer	Suggested not over 70 days of age on show date	 → Optional to enter in 4-HOnline → *Rabbit without tattoos that best fit the criteria of a pet should be shown in the Pet class

SHEEP PROJECT

Exhibiting Class	ID Required for NDSF Participation	
Ewes and Ewe Lambs	→ Official scrapies ID tattoo OR scrapies tag (with animal # & flock #)	
Rams and Ram Lambs	→ Wethers rrequire either an official scrapies ID tattoo or tag or an official USDA 840 ear tag	
Market Ewe and Wether Lamb	(not required to be scrapies)	
	→ Entered in 4-H Online	

SWINE PROJECT

Exhibiting Class	Birth Dates	ID Required for NDSF Participation
Breeding Gilts	Varies by class	→ Official USDA 840 ear tag
Market Gilts and Barrows		→ Ear notches in both ears utilizing Universal Ear Notch System matching registration papers (if registered)
		→ Entered in 4-H Online

14.5.1 Cattle

It is required to enter animal(s) in 4-HOnline.

Animals must have individual ear tags, unique tattoos or registration tattoos that match the presented registration papers (if registered). 840 EID tags are required for all intact beef and dairy cattle (implemented nationwide by the USDA Nov. 2024). Brands are not allowable IDs because they only mark a herd, not an individual animal.

14.5.2 Goats

It is required to enter animal(s) in 4-HOnline.

Does and bucks must have an official scrapies ID tattoo or scrapies tag (found here).

The Code of Federal Regulations 79.2 and the National Scrapie Eradication Program Standards allow sheep and goats to be officially identified with registry tattoos for movement in interstate commerce, with some exceptions. Breeds approved by USDA-APHIS-VS may use their "breed registration tattoo" in lieu of a scrapie tag. Wethers require ear tags (not required to be scrapies) or unique tattoos.

14.5.3 Horses

It is required to enter animal(s) in 4-HOnline.

For helmet requirements, see Equine Helmet Policy.

14.5.4 Poultry

Poultry may be entered in 4-HOnline, but are not required.

To comply with federal animal health regulations, all poultry exhibited must meet Pullorum-Typhoid (PT) testing requirements. At least one of the following must be documented:

- The poultry originated directly from a National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP)-certified flock
- The poultry tested negative for Salmonella pullorum within 90 days prior to exhibition
- The poultry was purchased from an NPIP-certified source and is accompanied by a completed Poultry Exhibition Statement of Origin Form (SRN 60329)

These requirements are established at the federal level to ensure the health and safety of poultry exhibited at public events.

Extension agents have the option to become certified to conduct PT testing, though this is not a requirement. Certification opportunities are coordinated through the North Dakota State Veterinarian's Office, which offers training sessions for those interested.

14.5.5 Rabbits

Rabbits may be entered in 4-HOnline, but are not required.

A tattoo is required for breeding and market rabbits to show. Tattoos are not required, but are still suggested, for rabbits that will be participating in pet shows.

14.5.6 Sheep

It is required to enter animal(s) in 4-HOnline.

Intact breeding ewes and rams must have an official scrapies ID tattoo or scrapies tag (with the animal number and flock number). Wethers require an ear tag (but are not required to have a scrapies tag).

The Code of Federal Regulations 79.2 and the National Scrapie Eradication Program Standards allow sheep and goats to be officially identified with registry tattoos for movement in interstate commerce, with some exceptions. Breeds approved by USDA-APHIS-VS may use their "breed registration tattoo" in lieu of a scrapie tag.

14.5.7 Swine

It is required to enter animal(s) in 4-HOnline.

Swine must have Official ear tags and notches in both ears (via the Universal Ear Notch System).

14.5.8 Dogs

Dogs over three months of age shall have been vaccinated against rabies, in accordance with the specifications of the vaccine used. A copy of the current rabies certificate must accompany the animal and include the rabies tag number and the vaccination serial number.

Dogs must wear a collar that identifies the dog's name and owner contact information when not actively showing.

The Bordetella vaccination, as well as the distemper-parvo series, is recommended.

14.5.9 Cats

Cats over three months of age shall have been vaccinated against rabies, in accordance with the specifications of the vaccine used. A copy of the current rabies certificate must accompany the animal and include the rabies tag number and the vaccination serial number.

Cats must wear a harness as a safer and more secure way of handling the animal, which must identify the cat's name and owner's contact information.

14.5.10 Other Animals

All other animals shall be in compliance with North Dakota's standards, which can be found on the North Dakota Department of Agriculture site.

These requirements are designed to protect the animals and the participants, fostering a safe and responsible environment for all. These requirements may be changed on short notice at the request of the North Dakota Board of Animal Health or the USDA as they work to address disease presence or concerns.

14.6 Animal Showmanship **Expectations**

In 4-H, animal science projects and showmanship classes are designed to be meaningful, educational experiences that help youth grow in knowledge, confidence, responsibility and animal handling skills. The focus is on what youth learn through the process — building character, deepening understanding of animal care and developing skills that will serve them in life. While friendly competition can add excitement, the ultimate goal is not about winning or having separate categories, but rather about encouraging growth, inclusion and learning for all participants.

On occasion, livestock breeds with unique physical characteristics or limitations may be exhibited. In general showmanship classes, thoughtful accommodations may be made in advance, in collaboration with judges, to allow for appropriate adjustments — such as alternate patterns, obstacles or handling techniques — that align with that breed's standards. This does not mean a separate class must be created for each breed; rather, all showmanship participants must exhibit together, with accommodations communicated clearly and respectfully to ensure a fair and inclusive experience for all.

These accommodations must be communicated in an educational and respectful way to both the audience and other participants to foster understanding and support. The following is an example:

"Last in the arena is Exhibitor XXX. You'll notice the unique attributes of their animal and may see some variations in how showmanship is demonstrated. These adjustments ensure the animal is handled in a way that is safe and appropriate for its breed, allowing the exhibitor to confidently showcase their skills and knowledge."

By creating an environment rooted in learning and empathy, all youth are supported and encouraged in their journey, no matter the animal or the outcome.

14.7 Animal Biosecurity



In the dynamic world of animal husbandry, ensuring the health and safety of livestock is a top priority. Biosecurity is the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of infectious diseases and to maintain overall health. For 4-H participants, understanding and practicing biosecurity not only safeguards the well-being of their animals but also contributes to the integrity of the agricultural community.

When hosting any Extension program involving animals — especially on private land or locations where participants may travel between farms or homes organizers must consider and communicate potential biosecurity risks. All participants must be made aware of the personal responsibility and potential risk of disease transfer to animals or property through their involvement. Clear guidance and precautions must be provided to minimize risk and promote safe participation for all.

14.7.1 Purpose of Biosecurity Measures



As stewards of animal welfare, 4-H participants hold a role in maintaining the integrity of local food systems and preserving the health of livestock populations. By embracing biosecurity principles, youth cultivate essential skills beyond the boundaries of their immediate projects. They learn to recognize potential risks and develop proactive strategies to mitigate them.

Furthermore, by exemplifying proper biosecurity protocols, 4-H participants become mentors within their communities, guiding others toward responsible animal care practices.

14.7.2 Enforcement and Compliance

All 4-H participants bear the responsibility of biosecurity. Failure to follow safe practices, as deemed by Extension agents, may result in corrective actions, including but not limited to additional training, suspension from activities, or other measures as deemed necessary by Extension county agents.

14.7.3 Key Biosecurity Measures



1. Stay informed

- Be continuously educated on the latest biosecurity protocols and emerging threats.
- Attend workshops, read reputable sources and participate in discussions to stay updated.

2. Prevent cross-contamination

- Implement strict protocols to avoid transferring contaminants between different animal groups or breeds.
- Use dedicated equipment and clothing for different animal groups where possible.

3. Avoid introducing unwell animals

- Conduct regular health checks on all animals.
- Quarantine new or returning animals for a period recommended by current veterinary protocols before integrating them with the existing herd or flock.

4. Practice safe biosecurity measures

- Disinfect hands, footwear and equipment before and after handling animals.
- Properly dispose of waste and disinfect areas in contact with animals.
- Ensure that feed and water sources are clean and free from contamination.

14.8 Animal Injury, Illness and Substitution

The health and well-being of animals in North Dakota 4-H programs are a top priority. In the event of an injury or illness, proper care and veterinary guidance must be sought immediately to ensure the animal's welfare. When substitution is necessary due to medical reasons, it must align with 4-H protocols and be approved through the appropriate process.

These policies help maintain fairness in competitions, uphold ethical treatment standards, and support youth in responsible animal care and management.

14.8.1 Horse Division

If a change in horse entries occurs due to an injury or illness, the 4-H'er may substitute another horse they have ID'd in 4-H Online by May 1, illustrating that the animal has met the animal ID deadline. Substitutions will not be allowed without previous notice.

14.8.2 Livestock Division

Substitutions of livestock animals are allowed in the case of injury or illness, but only by another animal that the family had identified in 4-H Online by May 1, illustrating that the animal has met the animal ID deadline.

In the event it is decided that a livestock animal is better suited for a different class (for example, a heifer shown in market class at the county fair, but the judge encourages youth to show in a breeding class at the North Dakota State Fair instead), this is an acceptable exchange. When opportunities are limited at the local level, youth can change classes with the approval and support of the local NDSU Extension staff when promoted to the North Dakota State Fair.

14.9 Animal Qualification

Participation in the North Dakota State Fair is a prestigious opportunity for 4-H exhibitors to showcase the animals that meet specific breed, species and class standards. Ensuring that animals align with established breed ideals and exhibition rules highlights 4-H members' dedication to animal herdsmanship.

Due to space limitations, only top-performing animals that have successfully met qualification standards will be eligible to attend. This process ensures a fair and competitive environment while maintaining the highest level of animal care and exhibition excellence.

14.9.1 Horse Division

Horses are required to qualify in each class the 4-H'er would like to show in at the North Dakota State Fair. Because several 4-H horse shows are held after the entry date, each 4-H'er must enter those events they anticipate qualifying and participating in. Youth may bring an updated copy of the entry form to registration/check-in at the North Dakota State Fair. The 4-H'er's local Extension agent or the horse show superintendent from an open 4-H horse show must sign the North Dakota State Fair 4-H Horse Show Form. The local Extension agent can deny or accept what is classified as a qualifying horse show.

Exhibitors may enter each class appropriate for their age if they received a blue ribbon in this event in a county 4-H show beginning Aug. 1 of the previous year, and it is with the same horse and will be participating in the same age division.

14.9.2 Livestock Division

Exhibiting livestock at the local level is a critical step in the development of young participants, offering them practical experience, feedback and community support as they prepare for the state fair. All livestock animals must be exhibited at their local county fair/4-H Achievement Day unless their county fair/4-H Achievement Day is held after the North Dakota State Fair, or their local facility is limited on space. The local Extension agent has the authority to deny or accept varying requests.

15. Shooting Sports

4-H shooting sports are an important part of North Dakota 4-H. The sport emphasizes safety and responsibility core tenets of 4-H.

Shooting sports age eligibility is slightly different to align with the requirements for participation in the National Championships. As a result, youth ages are determined as of Jan. 1 each year, rather than the typical Sept. 1 used for the 4-H year. Therefore, 4-H shooting sports is open to members who are 8 to 18 years old as of Jan. 1.

Volunteers, like in all other 4-H project areas, are integral to the success and the risk management of shooting sports. The volunteers are highly qualified to handle the stakes of and the essential safety measures involved in keeping the program running smoothly and comfortably.

There are many facets to shooting sports, including classes and divisions, preparation, risk management and safety precautions, equipment, training and discipline.

The Shooting Sports folder in the North Dakota 4-H Google Drive has a wealth of information about safety procedures, contest rules and recommendations to keep participation in shooting sports a worthwhile, educational experience.

16. 4-H Contests and Exhibits 🛕



North Dakota 4-H contests and exhibitions are designed and offered to provide additional value to youth programs. The agent, coach and participant are responsible for reading and understanding the rules and procedures for these events. The North Dakota 4-H Google Drive has an expansive library of additional information specific to the contests.

Exhibitions are events where the participant is primarily competing against a standard. Examples include county/ state fairs, 4-H Achievement Days, project expo, clothing revue and similar events.

Contests are events where participants compete as individuals and/or teams and are ranked in order.

For information on the North Dakota 4-H ribbon system, see Ribbons Descriptions in the Appendix section.

16.1 4-H Event Rules and Regulations

Participation in county, district, state and national events will be based on the age established for the event. Some events may have different specific dates for age requirements. Refer to each county, district, state and national contest rules. Carefully read through each document.

It is the responsibility of the 4-H member to understand the rules and regulations for the event or activity they are participating in. Carefully read each event rule as they may differ from one county to the next.

16.2 North Dakota 4-H Contest and Exhibition Rules

The North Dakota 4-H Contest and Exhibition Rules outline the official protocols for participation in contests and exhibits at the county and state levels. These rules provide essential details regarding eligibility, entry requirements, age divisions, team composition, scoring, and overall expectations for participants. Designed to ensure fairness and consistency, the protocols support youth in showcasing their skills, knowledge,

and achievements across a variety of project areas. Participants are encouraged to review the full set of rules for each contest they enter at the county and the state level to understand specific criteria for their chosen contest or exhibit. Rules may vary from contest to contest between counties.

16.2.1 Official Participation in Contests and **Exhibitions**

Participation in an official state 4-H contest or exhibition requires 4-H membership to be shown as "Active" in 4-H Online. Participants must be enrolled in the county they are representing.

16.2.2 Entries in Contests and Exhibitions

Entries in a state 4-H contest and exhibition will be made through, or with the approval of, the Extension office in the county that the youth represent.

16.2.3 Age Divisions for Contests and **Exhibitions**

Every contest will have different age divisions. Ensure the contest rules are read and understood to ensure youth are registered in the appropriate division.

16.2.4 Number of County Participants in **Contests and Exhibitions**

The number of participants from a county is limited only when facilities and resources dictate, and will be indicated in specific contest rules and procedures.

16.2.5 Teams in Contests and Exhibitions

If a contest has a specific number of participants allowed on a team, multiple teams may be formed, or other participants from that county may compete as individuals unless contest procedures specify otherwise. Individual participants are eligible for all individual awards. Ensure each contest's rules are completely read through.

16.2.6 Scoring in a 4-H Contest or Exhibition

In contests where individual scores are added to create a team score, the top three scores will be used for the team score.

16.2.7 Eligibility in 4-H Contests and **Exhibitions**

Contestants in North Dakota state 4-H contests must not have participated in official post-secondary (university, college, junior college or technical school) competitive events of a similar nature and in the same subject matter area. (i.e., a contestant who has competed in an official collegiate livestock judging contest is not eligible to compete in the national 4-H livestock judging contest.)

16.2.8 Multicounty Teams

Counties are encouraged to recruit enough participants (at least three for most contests) to form a team. However, in the event a county has less than three members on a team in an age division, the county may combine with other counties who have less than three participants to form a team. Specific contest exceptions to this rule are written in the individual contest protocols. While not required, it is suggested that county combinations be counties that border each other.

16.2.9 4-H Shooting Sports

North Dakota 4-H shooting sports participants must be proficient in their discipline before they can compete in any contest. A match must not be their first experience. By entering into 4-H Shooting Sports events, the team coach or shooting sports program coordinator verifies that the youth entered are knowledgeable and proficient in the safe use of the equipment and the fundamentals of the event. Match and/or range officials may dismiss or disqualify a participant if they believe the participant does not demonstrate the basic proficiency and knowledge required.

For more information, see Shooting Sports.

16.2.10 North Dakota State Fair

The North Dakota State Fair is one of 4-H's most valued and impactful partners. Their ongoing support plays a vital role in helping showcase and celebrate the work of 4-H youth across the state. Please take every opportunity to thank them for their continued investment in youth development and for the platform they provide to elevate the program.

Each year, a North Dakota 4-H Division Exhibit List book is developed to guide participation in the state fair. This document includes detailed exhibit rules, class descriptions and guidelines, and is housed on the North Dakota 4-H Google Drive within the State Fair Folder. It serves as the central reference for counties, volunteers

and families preparing for the fair. Youth and families must read the state fair exhibit book annually for updates.

North Dakota 4-H leadership would love to hear from anyone interested in serving as a volunteer judge, assisting with an animal show or helping in another capacity The North Dakota 4-H program depends on the time, talents, and generosity of volunteers. The program is always looking for individuals with diverse skills and expertise. Volunteer involvement makes a lasting difference.

16.3 North Dakota 4-H Event **Dress Codes**

The state 4-H dress code is crafted with safety and inclusivity in mind for all participants. Youth and adults represent themselves and their organization when participating in 4-H events.

The dress code for state events shall follow the written policy. County agents may require additional dress requirements as long as they uphold 4-H values and the proper use of the 4-H Name and Emblem. If specific attire is created for an event or team, an Extension agent must approve the development of all attire to ensure it upholds the 4-H Name and Emblem standards.

16.3.1 Attire for Formal Contest and Exhibit Events

Members participating in North Dakota state 4-H competitive events must be neatly dressed and wear a solid-colored white, gray, black, yellow or green shirt with the 4-H emblem prominently displayed and/or securely fastened on the front (a safety pin is acceptable if the pin is not visible). Acceptable types of shirts include a crew neck shirt, button down, blouse or a polo. Clothing must be appropriate, modest, and suitable for a youth-focused environment. Tops must provide full coverage, ensuring that the chest area remains covered in both standing and bending positions. Shirts must be a full length that can be tucked in. Pants, slacks, skirts or shorts should be black, navy blue or khaki in color, free of holes, and an appropriate length. Spandex/leggings/yoga pants that are sheer or see-through are not deemed appropriate. Sweatpants and joggers/activewear are not deemed professional attire and will not be worn during a contest or event.

Protective closed-toed shoes or boots are required when showing livestock, and participants are strongly encouraged to wear long sleeves to protect their arms. Participants shall wear dark-colored jeans with no holes to show livestock. When showing dairy (goats or cattle), participants may wear white pants/jeans.

All young people who participate in any mounted horse activity in North Dakota 4-H are required to wear a properly fitted American Society of Testing Materials/ Safety Equipment Institute-approved harness helmet. Refer to the North Dakota 4-H Horse Show Rules and Judging Guide for clothing and all other rules and regulations for the 4-H Horse Project.

Some contests/events may disallow hats and other headwear. Carefully read the rules of the contest. Accommodations may be made with prior Extension staff approval.

Official dress is required until the completion of awards. Photos are an essential part of awards and are used in various publications and social media. Failure to comply will result in deductions. Refer to contest rules for specific inquiries.

Exceptions will be noted in individual contest or exhibition protocols. Refer to specific rules for each respective contest.

16.3.2 Attire for Informal Events

For informal events such as camps, state conferences, clinics, or project activities, North Dakota 4-H requires participants to wear mindful attire.

Mindful attire refers to clothing that is neat, clean, and appropriate for the activities involved. Clothing must not display or promote violence, obscenity, illegal substances, pornography, discrimination, intimidation, or any other content inconsistent with the 4-H Code of Conduct.

Clothing and swimwear must provide appropriate coverage and support a safe, inclusive environment. Attire must cover all undergarments and private areas, and must maintain coverage during typical movement, such as bending or stretching. Clothing that is too revealing — such as shirts that hang open when leaning forward or pants that slip too low — may result in the participant being asked to change into more appropriate clothing.

When working with animals, participants must wear closed-toed shoes. Long sleeves are strongly recommended to help prevent scratches or injury.

Hats and headwear must not obstruct the face and must allow for clear visibility and communication between participants, staff and volunteers.

16.4 National 4-H Contest and **Exhibition Rules**

Participation in national 4-H contests must have the approval of the NDSU Extension assistant director for 4-H Youth Development. Participation is required in the state contest to represent North Dakota in a national 4-H contest. Since most national contests allow four participants, the top four scores from the state-winning team will be eligible. If one of those members cannot participate, the team may add another member from their team (preference in rank order from the state contest). If a team eligible to attend a national contest has less than four members, the team may invite a member from another team to participate with them if approved by the assistant director for the North Dakota 4-H Program. The relevant Extension staff from both counties and all participants' parent(s)/guardian(s) must agree in writing. Second-place or subsequent teams may have the opportunity to participate in the national 4-H contest if the top-scoring team chooses not to attend.

Participants in a national 4-H contest are not eligible for future national contests of the same event unless the national contest allows repeat participation. If a 4-H member is not eligible for the official national 4-H contest, they do not qualify for the state 4-H contest unless specific state contest rules specify different eligibility rules.

When attending a national 4-H event, review the dress code requirements specific to the event.

Refer to the specific rules and policies of the event for the most updated guidance.

16.4.1 National Contest Travel Support

The North Dakota 4-H Foundation is committed to supporting youth who represent the state at approved national 4-H events. Based on available funding, the Foundation may award travel assistance to qualifying teams and individuals.

Award amounts are determined by event type and level of participation:

- A team of four may receive up to \$1,000 in travel assistance
- A two-person team may be awarded \$200 total
- An individual participant may be awarded \$100

All funding requests must be submitted in writing by the Extension agent from the county of the qualifying youth. Requests must be emailed to the North Dakota 4-H

Foundation, Executive Director, with a copy sent to the appropriate state 4-H specialist.

The written request must include the following:

- · Name and date of the national event
- · Names of participating youth
- · Name and mailing address of the check recipient (must be a 4-H council or club; checks will not be issued to individuals)
- · Total amount requested

16.4.2 Chaperone Travel Support

The North Dakota 4-H Foundation or NDSU Extension will cover travel expenses for one chaperone accompanying youth selected to attend National 4-H Congress or National 4-H Conference. These events provide youth with transformational experiences — engaging with national leaders, exploring diverse perspectives, experiencing travel and developing leadership skills.

Chaperoning one of these events is a meaningful way to support youth development, explore new places and gain valuable experience as a volunteer leader. All chaperones must complete the required volunteer screening process.

Those interested in chaperoning one of these premier opportunities must reach out to learn more.

16.5 Deadlines in 4-H

Deadlines play a critical role in 4-H, helping youth develop responsibility, time management, and accountability essential life skills that align with the 4-H Thriving Model and prepare them to be "beyond ready" for life and work. Meeting deadlines fosters self-discipline, planning and follow-through, while also ensuring fairness and equity across all participants.

Beyond youth development, deadlines are necessary for program quality. They allow event planners to secure supplies, reserve space, develop show materials, order food and manage logistics effectively. Without clear timelines, it becomes significantly more difficult to provide a positive and well-organized experience for all involved.

In alignment with 4-H's commitment to positive youth development, the goal of enforcing deadlines is not to punish the individual, but to create a learning opportunity that promotes growth. When possible, consequences should be directed at the project or exhibit — not the youth themselves. For example, applying point deductions, adjusting award eligibility or forfeiting premium sale participation allows youth to still engage in the experience, receive feedback and grow from it. Take into account the number of years the youth has been in 4-H.

This approach reinforces critical social-emotional skills such as resilience, growth mindset and personal responsibility — cornerstones of the 4-H Thriving Model.

We recognize that there may be rare and serious situations in which youth are not able to participate due to missed deadlines. These instances should be handled with empathy, consistency and transparency. The grievance policy is in place to ensure that families can voice concerns and receive a fair review when needed.

By maintaining firm but fair deadline expectations, and focusing on accountability over punishment, not only learn from their mistakes but also develop the lifelong skills needed to thrive as responsible, engaged citizens.

16.6 Late Entries on the Day of an Event

If the 4-H council, 4-H club or Extension staff decides that late registrations are not permissible on the day of an event or contest, the decision is final. Making last-minute changes can be challenging and will disrupt the smooth operation of the event.

Managing deadlines is an essential skill that teaches responsibility, time management and respect for others' time and effort. 4-H creates a positive and equitable environment for all participants by adhering to deadlines.

It takes everyone's understanding and cooperation to uphold 4-H's commitment to effective event management and youth development.

16.7 Dropped Exhibits

Counties have the authority to establish a reasonable policy for dropping exhibits. This must be messaged at least three weeks prior to the event.

16.8 Consequences for Missing **Deadlines**

Counties must establish and communicate their own deadline policy. The state policy leaves flexibility for counties to meet their individual communities' needs. County deadline policies must be developed with input from county 4-H councils, 4-H clubs and Extension agents, utilizing local decision-making. Counties must clearly communicate their decisions regarding deadlines and apply the same standards consistently for all youth.

The following is a sample deadline policy statement for a 4-H club:

To ensure fair and efficient management of 4-H events and programs, all deadlines must be strictly adhered to. The following protocols outline the consequences for missing deadlines related to 4-H competitive events, enrollment and other county-level requirements.

Specific instances that counties may need to decide on include the following:

- Missing animal ownership deadline
- Missing county fair/4-H Achievement Days entry
- · Missing other contest entry
- Missing member registration deadline (consequence must not prevent participation in 4-H programs)
- · Missing submission for awards trips

Examples of reasonable consequences counties may choose to implement include the following:

- · Docking of premium points
- Deduction of a Danish ribbon placing
- Forfeiting of the ability to receive grand/reserve champion
- Revoking of eligibility to participate in a premium sale
- · Raising or doubling the entry fee if there is one

16.9 State Consequences for Missing Deadlines

If an exhibitor misses an animal ownership deadline, they may receive a blue, red or white ribbon but are ineligible for ribbon placing.

If an exhibitor misses a state fair entry, they may receive a blue, red or white ribbon but are ineligible for ribbon placing.

If an exhibitor misses a state contest/event entry, they may compete/participate but must pay a late entry fee. Some events have a late registration period and associated fees. After the final registration date, youth are unable to participate.

If a 4-H member misses camp registration, they cannot participate due to the copious planning needed.

17. 4-H Special Events 🛆

Within 4-H, there are opportunities to participate in many engaging and hands-on events and activities. These events can significantly enrich the 4-H experience and are essential to the North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program. Special events provide a platform for experiential learning, which helps youth build critical life skills. To ensure a consistent and safe environment for positive youth development, there are expectations and protocols for these special events. This section outlines these expectations and protocols for various event types and offers general guidance for specific activities. It required that these standards be adhered to and that the provided guidance is thoroughly consulted, fostering an environment where all participants are safe, experience a positive learning environment and can truly thrive.

4-H is a program that strives for inclusivity and belonging. For specific ways to make events more inclusive and accessible, see Accessibility in 4-H.

17.1 Parades

North Dakota 4-H is dedicated to ensuring safe and healthy environments for all participants in programs and activities. While preparing floats and joining parades can be exciting opportunities to showcase 4-H, it's essential to recognize the associated risks. This policy highlights both the expectations and strong guidance for managing these risks.

In the case of conflicting rules or policies, the more stringent regulations of the county parade take precedence. However, it is essential to note that the rules outlined in this parade policy cannot be less restrictive than those set by the county.

All parade members must abide by the Code of Conduct.

Due to the nature of parades, safety is of the utmost importance.

17.1.1 Assumption of Risk Participating in Parades

All individuals participating in a parade on behalf of the North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program do so at their own risk, understanding that potential hazards can be significant. It is essential to recognize that situations can escalate rapidly, and a momentary lapse in attention from a youth, volunteer or spectator can have serious consequences. Although youth are encouraged to exercise sound judgment and awareness, it is crucial to acknowledge that their cognitive abilities, particularly in processing their surroundings, are still developing. Consequently, their reaction to unexpected events, such as candy falling under a moving float, may pose a significant risk as they might instinctively reach for the object without fully comprehending the potential danger of their actions.

To ensure safety and proper oversight, all parade plans must be approved by the local NDSU Extension agent. This approval process will help ensure that the plan, design and implementation of the parade experience are thoroughly reviewed and meet safety standards.

17.1.2 Safety Guidance Before Parade

Because 4-H is about youth development, teaching youth how to identify and act in hazardous scenarios is paramount. Parade participants must hold a safety meeting prior to the parade to review expectations and protocols and specific parade rules established by the parade organizers. County agents may also ask participants to sign the Parade Participation Agreement (see Parade Participation Agreement in the appendix).

Additional topics could include the following:

- Identifying hazards and planning a strategy must an unexpected incident occur.
- Identifying the location of the fire extinguisher and knowing how to shut off the generator or other electrical equipment.
- Identifying a method to alert the driver to stop in the event of an emergency.

17.1.3 Floats and Float Vehicles

A float must be towed by a safety-tested commercially available vehicle (car, truck or tractor), excluding things such as self-assembled go-carts.

ATVs and UTVs may be used during a parade if they are driven by NDSU Extension staff or screened 4-H

volunteers who are authorized drivers and at least 21. They must follow the manufacturer's guide for operation and towing.

The towing vehicle must be insured by the owner, and all insurance follows the towing vehicle.

NDSU Extension and the 4-H representatives are not responsible for any damages incurred to floats or anything towing a float. NDSU Extension and 4-H are not responsible for any injuries to passengers in the parade. This includes set-up and tear-down.

17.1.3.1 Recommended Guidance for Floats and Float Vehicles



All motorized units must proceed at a slow parade pace. No skidding, racing or sudden braking is allowed.

Float beds must be sturdy and capable of carrying the weight imposed.

Floats must be equipped with a portable ABC fire extinguisher.

Floats must not be overcrowded. This is at the discretion of the NDSU Extension agent or an appointed approved volunteer.

The float vehicle must be properly serviced for gasoline, water, oil, brakes, tires and battery prior to entry into the parade. No extra gasoline can be carried on the float vehicle other than in the vehicle's tank.

Floats must be in sound condition. No portions of the float must be hanging, suspended or floating off the ground. The NDSU Extension agent reserves the right to remove any floats or items on the float that appear to be unsafe.

Decorative material and the parade structure must be kept clear of the exhaust system of a motorized float.

Portable generators must be used in accordance with the manufacturer's operation and safety instructions.

Portable generators must be secured to the parade float. Refueling of generators must not be permitted.

17.1.4 Float Drivers

The float must be driven by a North Dakota 4-H-screened volunteer 21 years of age or older and an authorized driver with a valid driver's license who has the ability to safely maneuver the vehicle both forward and backward.

17.1.4.1 Recommended Guidance for Float Drivers



Floats must be escorted to and from the parade site. Proper and visible running lights must be attached to the float vehicles if unescorted.

The driver must have a clear field of view to avoid other floats, participants and spectators. If the driver needs to reverse the parade float, the driver must have sufficient personnel to guide the float.

Owner/operators of towing vehicles must be insured for use in parades. The vehicle owner assumes all risk, and parade participation by anyone is voluntary.

Owners of an automobile, tractor, ATV or UTV in the parade must confirm that their vehicle's insurance policy does not exclude use in a parade.

4-H leaders must ask if their parade has special event coverage for the parade participants. This must be noted in any incident report arising from parade activities.

Best practices for 4-H Insurance include the following:

- If all 4-H members participating are enrolled in 4-H Online and all adults are screened 4-H volunteers. these participants are already covered. There is no need for special coverage insurance.
- If anyone participating in the parade is not an enrolled 4-H member and is not a screened 4-H volunteer then the NDSU Extension agent must request special activities coverage through the county 4-H program to cover those helping or assisting in the event (insurance does not cover spectators).
- To request special activities coverage through American Income Life, fill out the Request Special Activities Insurance Document.

17.1.5 Nonmotorized Units

Nonmotorized units may include, but are not limited to, bicycles, skateboards and scooters (motorized or not).

Youth and adults must wear helmets.

Youth under the age of 12 utilizing a nonmotorized unit in a parade with a motorized vehicle must have adults walking with or using a similar unit alongside youth.

The number of people on any unit must not exceed what can be safely accommodated and has been recommended by the manufacturer.

17.1.6 Float Riders

No one is permitted to ride on the float as it is transported to and from the parade site.

Youth under 12 will not be permitted to ride on a float without adult supervision.

Uphold 4-H policy supervision ratios (see Chaperone Ratios) with a minimum of one responsible adult for every 10 youth.

17.1.6.1 Recommended Guidance for Float Riders



Two adults must ride on floats with youth participants.

All passengers standing or sitting on the float must have access to handholds or secure supports (i.e., railing) while the float is moving.

No riders must ride on the edge of the float. It is highly recommended that no feet be hanging off the side of the float at any point in time, as this presents a serious safety risk.

4-H members and volunteers must get on the float at the beginning of the parade and get off at the end of the parade. Getting on and off during the parade presents a safety risk and must be heavily cautioned against.

17.1.7 Distributing Materials During a Parade

Items thrown from a float or moving vehicle can cause injury and must not be thrown. This includes spraying water or other liquids at spectators.

To prevent spectators from running into the streets and to ensure their safety, candy or other items must be handed out close to the line of spectators and not thrown from a vehicle, float or unit.

The NDSU Extension agent reserves the right to limit certain types of handouts or giveaways.

Parade entries and items distributed must uphold the values and mission of 4-H and promote 4-H in a positive way.

17.1.7.1 Recommended Guidance for **Distributing Materials During a Parade**



To distribute candy or other items during a parade, 4-H members and adults must walk behind the float at a safe distance (minimum six feet) to provide items to spectators. Youth must not walk beside the float because of the risk of falling and being run over.

When distributing items from the float, it is crucial to have volunteer spotters positioned at the rear end of the trailer to maintain direct communication with the driver. They must walk at the rear driver's side corner of the float to have full view of what is happening at the back end of the float. These spotters must be able to alert the driver when items are being removed from the back of the trailer to be distributed and ensure immediate halting if necessary.

The spotter and driver must agree on easy hand or vocal signals to stop, go and slow down. Examples may be "stop" shown by a flattened palm perpendicular to the ground, "go" as a waving forward motion and "slow down" as a thumbs-down motion.

Items must only be distributed from the back of the trailer to ensure safety around the wheels of a trailer or moving vehicle. Adults may hand items to youth to distribute, but youth must not take items directly from the float.

The adult handing items off the trailer cannot simultaneously serve as the spotter. This ensures the spotter can focus on safety first.

Preparing items on a float to be handed off during a parade must be conducted while sitting. This mitigates the risk of falling due to sudden changes in the vehicle's movement. Standing or walking on a moving float is an inherently risky activity that must be avoided.

17.1.8 Animals in Parades

Participating in parades with animals is a unique and exciting opportunity for 4-H members to showcase their hard work, promote agriculture, and engage with the public. These events highlight the dedication of youth in animal care and provide a platform to represent 4-H in a positive and educational manner.

17.1.8.1 Requirements for Horses in Parades

Horses must be ridden by a North Dakota 4-H member or North Dakota 4-H screened volunteer. Friends or youth who are not members of 4-H may not ride a horse in a parade representing the North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program. Cloverbuds or younger siblings must not ride on horses.

The horse must be controlled at all times by the rider through the use of the bridle and reins.

Only one person must be on a horse. There are no double riders.

A helmet is required by all youth riders per 4-H policy. For more helmet specifics, see Equine Helmet Policy.

17.1.8.2 Recommended Guidance for Horses in Parades



Someone must follow the horse to clean up after the animal so those following behind animals (especially with special routines) do not need to avoid manure.

Volunteers are encouraged to wear a helmet when riding in a parade.

17.1.8.3 Requirements for Other Livestock/Animals in Parades

Dogs or other animals must be on a leash or haltered and kept at a safe distance from spectators.

17.1.8.4 Recommended Guidance for Other Livestock/Animals in Parades



The handler must clean up after the animal at all times.

A copy of the rabies tag and other vaccines must be close by during the parade and presented to the person overseeing the parade entry.

17.2 Field Trip/Day Trip

Field trips/day trips are a great way for 4-H youth to build skills, dig deeper into projects and develop interpersonal relationships. There are a few key expectations when planning and going on these types of trips.

17.2.1 Requirement for Field Trips/Day Trips

Each participant must have a completed and signed 4-H health form. These forms must be stored in a secure place away from youth, yet easily accessible to the 4-H volunteer must they need to act on any of the provided information.

If using transportation during the day trip, see Youth Transportation.

17.2.2 Recommended Guidance for Field Trips/Day Trips



Bring an emergency kit, including first aid supplies and contact information for local emergency services.

Check weather forecasts and prepare for changes in weather conditions.

Share an event schedule with youth participants and their parents/guardians prior to the event.

Create and share a recommended packing list with participants to ensure they bring the necessary items.

Outline any additional code of conduct expectations for the event.

Define clear learning objectives for the trip to ensure it is educational and aligns with 4-H goals.

17.3 Overnight Housing Policy

North Dakota 4-H is dedicated to ensuring safe and inclusive environments for all youth and adult participants in programs and activities. Overnight events often provide an in-depth experience for youth to engage with specific content, build skills, and develop core competencies like independence. When events have an overnight component, 4-H must cultivate a positive space for youth development. This overnight housing policy applies to all 4-H-sponsored youth overnight events where adults are housed with (or near) youth, or where youth and unrelated adults share bathrooms.

The overnight housing policy ensures the safety and wellbeing of youth and adults. This mandatory policy applies to any North Dakota 4-H sponsored state, regional, district, county or club-level overnight event where adults are housed with or share bathrooms with unrelated youth, such as workshops, events, fairs, exchanges, overnight trips, lock-ins and camps.

17.3.1 Housing of Participants

Youth participants aged 17 and under at the time of the event will be housed with other youth participants.

Adult participants aged 18 and up will be housed with other adult participants.

An adult participant may be housed with related youth; however, no unrelated youth will be housed in that room. Related is defined as immediate family, including parents/ guardians, grandparents and siblings. Nonrelated adults can stay with youth only when parent/guardian written consent is provided to the event coordinator. An unrelated member and an adult volunteer must never share a bed.

Youth will be housed separately based on their gender.

17.3.1.1 Housing Based on Gender

When there are gender-separated facilities and/or activities, individuals who identify as transgender or intersex must be allowed to sleep, use the restroom, shower and participate in alignment with their gender identity. Some individuals who are early in the stages of gender transition may feel more comfortable participating in ways that are in alignment with their sex assigned at birth, which is okay, too.

Do not require an individual to utilize single-user facilities (sleeping, restroom or shower) unless the other participants are also required. Singling out one individual because they have a different gender identity or are intersex can be alienating and, despite good intentions,

may be harmful to the individual. A single-user facility or other private option must be available to anyone requesting it. Some ways to offer private options include using dividers, hanging curtains or arranging private showering times.

For additional resources, see Practices for Inclusion of Individuals of All Genders and Sexual Orientations.

17.3.1.2 Alternative Lodging

If a team or group chooses to book nontraditional lodging such as Airbnb, VRBO or similar accommodations, North Dakota 4-H and NDSU Extension assume no financial or liability responsibility for that selection. The following conditions apply:

- 1. Liability and responsibility: The group assumes full financial and liability responsibility for the booking, including damages, disputes and cancellations.
- 2. Policy compliance: The lodging choice must still comply with 4-H housing policies, including youth-adult separation, bed-sharing restrictions and proper adult supervision.
- 3. **Documentation:** The responsible party must provide event organizers with the lodging details, including the address, rooming arrangements, and chaperone contacts.
- 4. **Supervision:** Chaperones must be approved 4-H volunteers and adhere to 4-H youth safety standards.
- 5. Awareness: The Extension agent and all parents must be informed of this lodging decision.

If a lodging option does not allow for proper youth-adult separation, an alternative arrangement must be made.

17.3.2 Beds for Participants

Participants at any overnight 4-H event or activity cannot share a bed. One bed per participant is required. An exception can be made for related youth. Related is defined as immediate family. Note that in cases such as a cabin setup, if no other housing is available, more than one adult must be housed in the cabin.

17.3.3 Supervision in Sleeping and Restrooms

Only adult volunteers of the same gender as the youth members may supervise members in an event's sleeping and restroom areas. Chaperones must follow 4-H Code of **Conduct** and Youth Protection protocols.

17.3.4 Documentation Needed

Chaperones must have on hand 4-H medical forms for each participant staying overnight. These forms must be stored in a secure place away from youth yet easily accessible to chaperones must they need to act on any of the provided information.

17.3.5 Expectation-setting with Youth

Chaperones or event management must identify and communicate a curfew with youth participants.

Share an event schedule with youth participants and their parents/guardians prior to the event.

Clearly document and communicate room assignments for the event.

Create and share a recommended packing list with participants to ensure they bring the necessary items.

Outline any additional code of conduct expectations for the event (such as how youth are required to treat other attendees, how youth must act in specific settings like a veteran's memorial, how youth must bring up concerns to chaperones, dress code, phone usage expectations, etc.)

17.3.6 Medications

The health and well-being of youth participants are a top priority in 4-H programs. Proper medication management is essential to ensure the safety of youth who require medications while attending any 4-H event, whether a single-day activity, overnight camp, or multiday experience. Keeping accurate medication logs helps ensure that youth receive the correct dosage at the right time, prevents potential medical emergencies, and provides transparency for parents, guardians, and event organizers.

Beyond compliance, tracking medications also protects staff and volunteers by establishing clear documentation of administration, reducing the risk of errors or misunderstandings. It is critical to have designated personnel responsible for handling medications, ensuring proper storage, and following appropriate protocols for administration.

Additionally, 4-H recognizes the importance of confidentiality and dignity when managing medications. Youth must feel supported in their medical needs while participating fully in programs. By implementing structured medication policies and logging procedures, the highest standards of care are upheld, creating a safe and inclusive environment for all participants.

17.3.6.1 Prescription and **Over-the-counter Medications**



4-H expects children with chronic health concerns to be capable self-managers. To ensure proper handling of medications, follow these protocols:

- · Obtain a doctor's note indicating exact dosage and directions specific to medical administration, when possible.
- Ensure participants bring enough medication for the entire duration of the event.
- Ensure medications are in their original containers and clearly labeled with the participant's name, whether prescription or over-the-counter.
- Ensure the participant has completed a health form detailing the reason for taking the medication, dosage and administration schedule.
- Ensure event staff follows the dosage and instructions on the medication label, and if the dosage has changed, the family must provide written authorization and update the label accordingly.
- · Ensure all medications are turned in at check-in and returned at check-out.
- Inform participants on the first day of the event about the schedule and procedures for medication administration.
- Ensure participants do not have free access to their medications, except for preapproved emergency medications (e.g., inhalers, EpiPens).

17.3.6.2 Medication Storage and Administration

Medications must be administered under the supervision of a designated individual, preferably with a medical background (LPN, RN, etc.).

The event leader is responsible for monitoring all medication distribution, and each administration must be recorded in a logbook, noting the time, dose and medication name.

Prescription medications must be stored in a locked container, while over-the-counter medications must be kept in a secure location not accessible to participants.

Participants are not allowed to keep any medications (including vitamins, ointments or lotions) with them, unless prior approval is granted for emergency-use items.

17.3.6.3 Staff and Volunteers Handling Medication

Camp chairs, chaperones, volunteers and other staff may keep their personal medications with them, provided they sleep in separate quarters from participants. Adults taking over-the-counter medication must also record their usage in the log.

Participants must not have access to staff personal belongings or sleeping areas.

Over-the-counter medications, such as Tylenol and Benadryl, may be available for common medical needs, but all distributions must be logged.

17.3.6.4 Medical Emergencies and Health Monitoring

If a participant requires medical attention from a physician, the guardian is responsible for any associated costs. Families will be notified if an illness or injury requires external medical treatment.

Event staff must monitor personal hygiene, including regular bathing and teeth brushing, to promote overall health and well-being.

17.3.6.5 Medication Log

The following is a sample log to track medications, including details like dosage and who administered the medication.

Sample Medication Log

4-H'er Name	Med. Name	Dosage	Time Admin.	Admin. By	Notes
Jan Bison	Amoxicillin	250 mg	8:00 AM	Nurse Kelly	took with breakfast
John Smith	Claritin	10 mg	12:00 PM	Camp Director	no issues reported
Sarah Lee	EpiPen	0.3 mg	2:30 PM	Nurse Kelly	allergic reaction

This structured approach ensures that all participants receive the care they need while maintaining a safe and organized event for youth and staff alike. Click here to see a full, usable medication log.

17.4 Emergency Preparedness

The purpose of this section is to outline the recommended guidance for both preparedness and action in emergency scenarios. The following lists best practices for responding to these types of events. Take time to consider what makes sense for each county/event given its unique environmental factors (such as the location of a tornado shelter).

Weather awareness PDFs are available to share with your 4-H clubs and communities on the ND 4-H Google Drive > Youth Protection Folder > Weather Awareness.

17.4.1 Lightning Safety Policy for **Outdoor Events**

Lightning safety is crucial for ensuring the well-being of participants in outdoor events. NDSU Extension staff and volunteers must adhere to the following protocols to protect everyone involved during thunderstorms. The following policy has been developed with information from the National Weather Service.

NDSU Extension personnel and volunteers must recognize the following:

- · All thunderstorms may produce lightning and are dangerous.
- Lightning can strike as far as 10 miles from any
- Most lightning deaths and injuries occur during the summer months and in the afternoon or evening.

17.4.1.1 Safety Precautions Before and **During Events**

Before and during outdoor events, personnel and volunteers must do the following:

- Monitor weather forecasts and be aware of any thunderstorms predicted for the event day.
- Use the "30-30 Rule": If the time between seeing lightning and hearing thunder is 30 seconds or less, the storm is within 6 miles, and outdoor activities must be halted.
- Ensure a safe shelter is accessible within a short distance from the event location. Safe shelters include fully enclosed buildings with wiring and plumbing or hard-topped vehicles with the windows up.

17.4.1.2 Seeking Safe Shelter

Immediately move all participants to a safe location when a thunderstorm threatens.

Avoid open structures like pavilions, tents or dugouts, and avoid tall objects such as trees, poles and fences.

17.4.1.3 Emergency Procedures in the Event of a **Lightning Strike**

Call 911 immediately for emergency assistance.

Avoid touching the victim directly; use nonconductive materials (including rubber gloves, plastic sheets, wooden boards, dry clothing, blankets, rubber mats, tarpaulins, canvas, plastic or wooden furniture or PVC pipes or tubes) if possible.

Administer first aid, including CPR, if necessary, until professional help arrives.

17.4.1.4 Resuming Activities

Wait at least 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder or flash of lightning before resuming outdoor activities.

Continuously monitor weather conditions to ensure the storm has completely passed before returning outside.

17.5 Water Events

North Dakota 4-H is dedicated to ensuring safe and healthy environments for all youth and adult participants in programs and activities. Events in and around bodies of water (naturally occurring or otherwise) incur a certain level of risk. This policy highlights both the expectations and strong guidance for managing these risks.

17.5.1 Utilizing These Expectations and Guidance

This set of expectations and guidance must be used when a group of youth is engaging in a 4-H activity within 100 feet of an artificial or naturally occurring body of water that is not fully fenced off. Potential water hazards may include canals, ditches, postholes, wells, fishponds and fountains. This section is broken down further into activities that occur near water and activities that occur in water.

For this section, "near water" activities are defined as "any activity within 100 feet of the shore of any sized body of water that is not fully fenced off." This definition may include activities such as games played by a lake shore or a 4-H picnic by a river.

For this section, activities that occur "in water" are defined as "any activity in which youth are expected to either be directly in the water or a vessel in the water of any sized body of water." This definition may include activities such as canoeing and swimming.

17.5.2 Activities That Occur Near Water

Identify an Extension agent, 4-H volunteer or parent/ guardian to monitor youth while they engage in activities near water. Make sure there is always at least one adult monitoring the youth.

Age of Youth	Standard Ratio (Youth: Adult)	Water Activities Ratio (Youth: Adult)	
5-8 years	6:1	4:1	
9-14 years	8:1	6:1	
15-18 years	10:1	8:1	
All ages (overnight events)	8:1 minimum, with at least two unrelated adults present	Same as above, with lifeguard required	

17.5.2.1 Near-water Activities Protocols

No tricycles, bicycles, skateboards or other riding toys can be used within 150 feet of the water.

No electrical appliances can be used within 20 feet of the water.

No running within 25 feet of the water.

17.5.2.2 Recommended Guidance for **Near-water Activities**

4-H volunteers and parents/guardians must clearly communicate expectations for how youth must or must not interact with the water prior to the start and at the beginning of the event. These expectations may include the following:

- How far youth must stay from the edge of the water
- What activities are prohibited from happening near the water
- The protocol for if a youth accidentally enters the water

Keep toys/playthings away from the body of water when not in use (i.e., put away pool floaties and do not have them near the body of water when youth are expected to stay out of the water).

17.5.3 Activities That Occur Specifically **Around Water**

A parent/guardian must sign a waiver (see appendix) for youth participating in activities in water. Youth with no waiver may not participate in the water-based activity. Youth and adults swim at their own risk.

17.5.3.1 Expectations for Around-water Activities

Participants in the activity must follow all of the rules of the facility or place.

Youth must never swim without adult supervision. For all events held in the name of 4-H, it is required that the following supervision ratios are used when youth are in the water:

- For youth ages five and under, one adult must be present for every two youth.
- For youth ages six to nine, one adult must be present for every four youth.
- For youth ages 10 to 18, one adult must be present for every six youth.
- For groups with a mix of ages, the youngest youth set the ratio (i.e., for a group with youth aged five, seven, eight and 10, a supervision ratio of two youth to one adult must be followed).

A phone must be within 10 seconds of reach of a supervising adult anytime youth are in the water.

Activities that are prohibited include the following:

- Swimming around anchored boats, in motorboat lanes or where people are waterskiing.
- · Swimming during electrical storms (adults must monitor weather conditions continuously to ensure safe conditions for water activities and cancel or postpone activities during adverse weather conditions).
- Diving in water that is less than nine feet deep or has not been made sure to be nine feet deep.
- Trying watersports such as skiing, scuba diving or snorkeling without instructions from a qualified teacher.

17.5.3.2 Recommended Guidance for **Around-water Activities**

It is highly advised that all youth participating in activities in or on water wear a personal flotation device in good working condition that is properly sized and approved by the U.S. Coast Guard.

Personal flotation devices (life jackets) must be used when boating, riding on a personal watercraft, fishing, waterskiing, or playing in a lake, river or stream. Water wings and other blow-up swimming aids must not be used in place of life vests.

It is highly advised that a certified lifeguard is on site when youth are engaging in activities in which they are in the water.

It is highly advised that when a lifeguard is not present, at least one of the supervising adults has CPR training. CPR training is provided by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association and local hospitals and fire departments.

4-H volunteers and parents/guardians must clearly communicate expectations for how youth must or must not interact with the water prior to the start and at the beginning of the event prior to entering the water. These expectations may include the following:

- How close youth must be to a supervising adult at all times
- What activities are prohibited in the water (i.e., dunking youth, etc.)
- Water safety: If youth swim or drift far from shore, they must stay calm and tread water or float on their back until help arrives

Implement a buddy system to ensure youth are always accompanied.

Recommended actions during a water emergency per the American Red Cross include the following:

- If a youth is missing, check the water first.
- · Alert the lifeguard if one is present.
- Recognize the signs of someone in trouble and shout for help.
 - A swimmer needs immediate help if they are not making forward progress in the water, are vertical in the water but unable to tread water or are motionless and face-down in the water.
- Rescue and remove the person from the water (without putting yourself in danger).
- · Ask someone to call emergency medical services. If alone, give two minutes of care, then call EMS.
- Begin rescue breathing and CPR.
- · Use an AED if available and transfer care to advanced life support.

For additional guidance on water safety, visit the American Red Cross water safety page.

17.5.3.3 Ice Safety

Never assume ice is safe. Ice conditions can quickly change, so never go out on any ice alone. Ensure an adult is always present when youth participate in activities on the ice. Before going onto frozen water, take safety precautions to reduce the risk of falling through the ice.

Life jackets are not just for swimming. Personal flotation devices (PFDs) are strongly recommended to be worn underneath a coat or overalls, as personal buoyancy is increased by keeping the head and musters above water.

Always assess ice for pressure ridge or ice heave, which can be extremely dangerous for snowmobile riders and other recreationalists. Information about ice formations and conditions can be found on this page by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

General rules of thumb for ice, according to North Dakota Game and Fish, are as follows:

- Stay off ice if it is less than 4 inches thick.
- 4 inches of good ice can support a person walking.
- 6 inches of good ice can support a snowmobile or ATV.
- 8 to 12 inches of good ice can support a car or small

12 to 15 inches of good ice can support a medium-sized pickup truck.

17.6 Adopting a Highway and Cleanup Safety Procedures

Community service projects like roadside trash cleanups align with the 4-H mission of empowering young people to lead, learn and serve their communities. These gestures are appreciated, as they provide an opportunity to make a meaningful impact on the environment and foster a sense of responsibility in young leaders. Below are some key safety protocols to follow, as well as the valuable skills youth may develop through this initiative. This essential information should be reviewed with participants before the event.

17.6.1The Value of Highway Cleanup Projects

1. Environmental stewardship

- · Helps reduce litter, protect wildlife habitats and improve water quality by preventing pollution.
- Promotes awareness of the impact of waste on ecosystems and encourages sustainable practices.

2. Community engagement

- Enhances the beauty and safety of local roads, which benefits both residents and visitors.
- Strengthens ties between 4-H and the broader community through visible service efforts.

3. Life skills gained

- . Civic responsibility: Youth learn the importance of giving back and become active citizens.
- Leadership and teamwork: Organizing shifts and working together strengthen leadership and communication skills.
- Time management: Planning and coordinating the project teaches accountability.
- Problem-solving: Youth can learn how to handle challenges, such as hazardous objects or logistical issues.
- Environmental awareness: Participation builds an understanding of sustainable practices and responsible waste management.

17.6.2 Tips for a Successful Highway **Cleanup Project**

Hold a safety meeting to cover the following with all members of the 4-H club that will be participating. Follow NDDOT's Adopt-A-Highway guidelines for volunteers...

- 1. Safety first: Ensure all participants wear highvisibility vests, closed-toed shoes and gloves and that everyone follows road safety guidelines.
- 2. Stay off the road: Stay at least five feet from the pavement edge. Do not go onto roadways, median strips or roundabout islands unless accompanied by an adult or law enforcement support with flashing lights.
- 3. Filled trash bags: Leave filled trash bags a minimum of five feet from the pavement edge to avoid obstructing traffic.
- 4. Headphones or noise interference not allowed: No headphones, earbuds, Shokz or anything that could interfere with hearing is allowed.
- 5. Adult supervision: Follow 4-H policies regarding youth-to-adult ratios. Adults should supervise participants at all times.
- 6. Traffic awareness: Face into oncoming traffic and look up often to ensure no vehicles are approaching.
- 7. Avoid hazards: Avoid construction areas, utility work zones and areas where wildlife or snakes may hide. Do not touch or attempt to remove known or suspected toxic hazardous substances such as needles. Inform youth of the potential for broken glass and sharp objects. Report hazardous waste to local authorities.

- 8. Motorized vehicles: If using ATVs or motorized vehicles to assist, youth cannot ride in the back of any type of motorized vehicle.
- 9. Lift correctly: Ensure youth are not lifting heavy objects alone. Instruction on safe lifting and moving techniques is encouraged.
- 10. Work in small groups: Work with others for better visibility and to avoid distracting drivers.
- 11. Stay with the group: Do not venture ahead or lag behind from the group.
- 12. Be prepared: Bring a first aid kit, water and a cell phone.
- 13. Partnership with local authorities: Reach out to the Department of Transportation or local Adopt-a-Highway program for required permits or supplies (e.g., trash bags). Inform the local police department and fire departments of the time and date you will be on the road.
- 14. Check weather: Check the weather before going. Notify local authorities if you change event times. Stop working in inclement weather, including lightning.
- 15. Trash sorting and recycling: Encourage youth to sort waste where possible and discuss recycling options.
- 16. Celebrate success: Acknowledge the hard work of the participants with recognition (certificates, celebration events or newsletter/media features).
- 17. Reflect: Reflect on what the group learned and experienced. This debrief helps reinforce key takeaways.
 - What was the most rewarding part of this experience?
 - What challenges did we encounter, and how did we overcome them?
 - What skills did you learn (teamwork, problemsolving, etc.)?
 - How did this experience change your understanding of service learning or environmental stewardship?
 - What actions are you interested in that we take next to continue making a positive impact?

17.7 Behavior Expectations and **Accountability**

While the goal is always to guide and support youth in making positive choices, some behaviors require intervention. Staff and volunteers will work with youth to address minor challenges through redirection, problemsolving and appropriate consequences. However, certain behaviors pose significant risks to the safety and wellbeing of participants, staff and the overall program environment. In such cases, disciplinary action, including possible removal from the event, may be necessary.

17.6.1 Grounds for Likely Removal from a 4-H Event

The following behaviors are grounds for removal from a 4-H event and will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis:

- · Noncompliant behavior (failure to follow event rules and reasonable directions from staff) or disruptive behavior
- Profanity, obscene gestures or indecent conduct
- · Fighting, bullying, threatening or other forms of violent or aggressive behavior
- Theft, vandalism or destruction of personal or event property
- · Use of illicit drugs, alcohol, vaping or tobacco
- · Sexual innuendo, sexual acts or sexually suggestive behavior

17.6.2 Grounds for Immediate Removal from a 4-H Event

North Dakota 4-H strives to equip youth with the tools to make responsible decisions, and these policies help maintain a respectful and enriching environment for everyone.

The following are grounds for an immediate removal of a participant from a 4-H event:

- Possession and/or use of cigarettes, cigars or other tobacco products
- Possession and/or consumption of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs
- Possession and/or use of any medication without staff supervision
- Possession of an unauthorized weapon
- · Repeated fighting, bullying, threatening or other violent or aggressive behavior
- · Sexual, racial, religious or other forms of harassment
- Leaving the event location without authorization or being in restricted areas without permission

All disciplinary actions will be handled with fairness and consistency, prioritizing the safety of all individuals involved. Parents or guardians must be notified if a participant faces removal, and arrangements will be made for their immediate departure.

18. Positive Youth Development 🛆 🛈

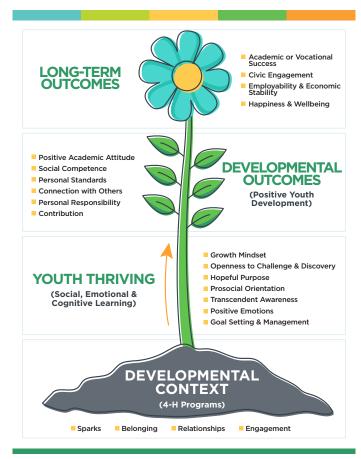
4-H program environments strive to offer youth a secure space to truly belong. These environments allow them to delve into their individual interests and things that bring them joy. These settings cultivate developmental relationships that embody care, encourage personal growth and distribute power equitably. These elements create a nurturing developmental context within the 4-H program as they cultivate essential life skills critical for the transition to adulthood.

4-H programs actively engage in Positive Youth Development by purposefully fostering social, emotional, cognitive and behavioral habits. The PYD process is described through the following seven indicators of thriving:

- A. Growth mindset
- B. Openness to challenge and discovery
- C. Hopeful Purpose
- D. Prosocial orientation
- E. Transcendent awareness
- F. Positive emotions
- G. Goal-setting and management

Youth engaging in high-quality developmental settings in 4-H that focus on essential social-emotional skills attain significant positive youth development outcomes. These outcomes encompass academic motivation and success, social competence, elevated personal standards, strong connections with others, a sense of personal responsibility and active contribution to the community through leadership and civic engagement.

Like every NDSU Extension program, the North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program is committed to incorporating relevant, science-based content for youth development. This approach aims to enhance and refine existing professional and organizational practices. The subsequent sections highlight tools and topics influencing the ongoing national dialogue about "Making the Best Better" within 4-H. This emphasis ensures that North Dakota 4-H remains relevant and responsive to the evolving science of youth development.



The 4-H Thriving Model developed by Dr. Mary Arnold (2018)

18.1 Positive Youth Development Foundational Pieces

4-H guiding principles and other values can be found on the 4-H website.

For an explanation of the iconography, **see 4-H Iconography**.

Other approved guidance for youth development can be found in the following resources:

- USDA's 4-H Professional, Research, Knowledge, and Competencies
- University of Wisconsin Extension's <u>Four Essential</u> <u>Elements of Positive Youth Development</u>
- Iowa State University Extension's <u>Targeting Life Skills</u> Model
- Youth Development Champions Project's <u>Indicators of</u> <u>Positive Youth Development</u>

18.2 Equal Protection

Using the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and subsequent legislation as a guide, NDSU Extension volunteers and paid staff must be fully committed to equal opportunity in educational programs and activities for all individuals consistent with NDSU's nondiscrimination policies. Anyone representing NDSU Extension must ensure programs are equally accessible to anyone desiring to participate. They must use all reasonable efforts to make people who have not participated feel included and welcome.

For more accessibility policies, see Accessibility in 4-H.

18.3 The 5 Steps of the Experiential Learning Model 📶



18.3.1 DO (Experience)

1. **Experience** — Youth engage in a hands-on activity where they explore, make decisions and take ownership of the outcome.

18.3.2 REFLECT (Skill-focused)

- 2. **Share** Youth discuss what happened and what they did during the activity.
- 3. **Process** Youth reflect on their choices, actions, challenges and successes — building emotional awareness, perspective and self-understanding.

18.3.2.1 Using Reflection to Support Thriving and **Beyond Ready Youth**

The Experiential Learning Model is a powerful way to help young people build self-awareness, life skills and purpose. When paired with intentional reflection questions, it becomes a tool for guiding youth toward the outcomes identified in the 4-H Thriving Model and the goals of the Beyond Ready initiative: preparing youth to be healthy, productive and engaged.

The questions asked during the "Share" phase help youth begin to articulate their experience and activate critical thinking. These conversations foster a sense of belonging, ownership and curiosity — all key contributors to thriving.

Below are sample "Sharing the Experience" questions, each with notes showing how they connect to thriving indicators and how they prepare youth to be Beyond Ready. These samples are used as a guide to empower leaders to build their own questions based on the skills and outcomes they want to strengthen.

18.3.2.2 Sharing the Experience: **Questions That Build Reflection and Readiness**

- 1. Tell me about what you did or created. This builds positive emotions by encouraging pride and excitement in what they accomplished. It helps the youth tell their story and feel seen.
- 2. What role did you play in the activity? This promotes self-awareness and supports goal setting and management, helping youth recognize their contributions and responsibilities.
- 3. Tell me about any past experience with this project area. This supports growth mindset and openness to challenge and discovery, as youth reflect on how they've progressed and what they've learned over time.
- 4. What was your goal for this project when you began? This directly ties to goal setting and management, prompting youth to connect intention with action — an essential skill for Beyond Ready youth.
- 5. What decisions did you make, and how did they affect the outcome? This encourages critical thinking, ownership and hopeful purpose by helping youth reflect on choices and consequences.
- 6. What are two things you had to plan and consider before beginning this project? This builds executive functioning and reinforces goal setting, preparing youth to approach challenges strategically and thoughtfully.
- 7. What was fun? What was hard? This supports positive emotions and openness to challenge, allowing youth to name both joyful and difficult moments and to find value in each.
- 8. Tell me one of your least favorite things about this project or working on your project. This promotes growth mindset by normalizing discomfort or frustration and helping youth reflect constructively on how they faced challenges.
- 9. What surprised you about your experience? This fosters transcendent awareness and openness to discovery, opening the door to new insights, shifted perspectives or unexpected learning.

18.3.2.3 Why This Matters

Linking reflection questions to thriving outcomes and the Beyond Ready mission designs conversations that achieve the following:

- Promote deep personal growth
- · Help youth build skills for real life, not just project success
- Reinforce learning that lasts beyond the activity
- Make space for every young person to feel valued, challenged and supported

Encourage volunteers and staff to tailor questions to the setting or youth needs. Use the Thriving Indicators and Beyond Ready checklist as tools to design or adapt prompts that spark meaningful learning.

18.3.2.4 Processing the Experience: Questions That **Build Depth, Insight and Readiness**

The Process phase of the Experiential Learning Model is where youth begin to think more deeply about what happened during their experience and why. This is where true growth begins. It helps youth identify personal strengths, reflect on problem-solving and recognize the internal and external factors that influence their outcomes.

When youth process their learning through intentional conversation, they are actively developing several Thriving Indicators, including growth mindset, goal setting and management, positive emotions, transcendent awareness and prosocial orientation. These are essential to helping youth become confident, capable and community-minded — the heart of the Beyond Ready initiative.

Here are questions that guide youth to reflect on the how and why of their experiences. Notes are included to show how each question supports positive youth development and helps staff and volunteers build their own reflective prompts.

18.3.2.5 Processing the Experience

- 1. How did you feel during the activity excited, frustrated, nervous, proud? This encourages positive emotions and emotional awareness, helping youth name and normalize the feelings they experienced throughout the learning process.
- 2. How did you make your decisions? This promotes critical thinking and goal setting and management as youth evaluate their decision-making process and begin to understand its impact.
- 3. Tell me about some of the steps you took to finish this project. This reinforces growth mindset and executive functioning, highlighting persistence and planning as key elements of success.
- 4. Did others in the group experience the same or different outcomes? This supports prosocial orientation and empathy, encouraging youth to listen, compare experiences and appreciate different perspectives.
- 5. What helped you stick with it when it was challenging? This builds openness to challenge and discovery and a resilient mindset, helping youth reflect on internal motivation and support systems.

- 6. What would you do differently next time, and why? This encourages a growth mindset and the ability to adapt and learn from mistakes — core traits of lifelong learners and future-ready leaders.
- 7. What was the most challenging part of your project? Why? How did you work to solve this challenge? This supports problem-solving and selfefficacy, while reinforcing the value of overcoming obstacles and learning through effort.
- 8. Did others help you? In what ways? This strengthens prosocial orientation, helping youth recognize the role of teamwork, encouragement and collaboration in achieving goals.
- 9. Why was this an important or useful thing to do? What life skill did you practice? Why is that skill important? This promotes transcendent awareness, hopeful purpose and applied learning — helping youth understand that their experiences have purpose beyond the project itself.
- 10. What did this activity teach you about yourself or others? This fosters self-awareness, empathy and personal growth, helping youth see themselves and their role in the group or community with greater clarity.
- 11. What new questions do you have about yourself? This encourages curiosity, reflection and openness to discovery — all essential traits in youth who continue to grow beyond a single experience.

18.3.2.6 Putting Processing It into Practice

Asking reflective questions like these helps youth shift from simply completing an activity to owning their learning. By thinking critically about their experience and how they grew, youth begin to understand their own capabilities and areas for growth.

Staff and volunteers can use these sample questions as-is or develop new ones using the Thriving Model and Beyond Ready principles as a guide. Question must achieve the following:

- Encourage emotional reflection
- Explore choices and decision-making
- Identify challenges and growth
- · Invite self-discovery and purpose

18.3.3 APPLY (Activity-Focused)

- 4. Generalize Youth make connections between the activity and real-life situations.
- 5. **Apply** Youth identify how they'll use what they learned in new contexts, reinforcing purpose and selfdirection.

18.3.3.1 Generalize: Connecting Learning to Real Life and the Future

The Generalize step in the Experiential Learning Model helps youth take what they learned from a specific activity or project and apply it more broadly to real-life experiences. This is where they begin to transfer learning from a 4-H setting into their daily lives — at school, in relationships, in their community or in future careers.

Supportive adults play a key role in this process. By answering thoughtful, intentional questions, youth see how their skills connect to the bigger picture. This builds the foundation for hopeful purpose, goal setting, decision making and other outcomes highlighted in the 4-H Thriving Model — all essential to developing Beyond Ready youth.

Below are sample generalizing questions, each connected to thriving outcomes, along with notes to guide caring adults in shaping similar, meaningful conversations.

18.3.3.2 Generalize Questions: Bridge Learning to Real-World Readiness

- What are key points you learned? This encourages transcendent awareness and positive emotions, helping youth identify core takeaways and internalize the value of their learning.
- What suggestions would you have for someone else who wanted to do a similar project? This builds prosocial orientation and communication skills, and it encourages youth to think beyond themselves and share knowledge with others.
- How did you use problem-solving skills? This supports critical thinking, growth mindset and goal setting, reinforcing how effort and strategy lead to solutions.
- 4. Where have you faced similar challenges in your life? This fosters openness to challenge and discovery by helping youth recognize patterns, apply lessons learned and draw on past experiences.
- 5. How are any of the life skills you gained through this experience important to you? This builds hopeful purpose and self-awareness, prompting youth to reflect on their values and why this learning matters to their personal goals.
- How would you describe your skill at ____? This
 reinforces growth mindset and helps youth develop
 language around their skills and competencies an
 important part of career readiness and confidence.
- 7. Where might this situation occur in the future? This promotes future thinking and transcendent awareness, encouraging youth to apply their knowledge to upcoming or unfamiliar settings.

- What did you learn about critical thinking or decision-making skills? This supports executive functioning, self-direction and goal setting and management — critical for thriving in both personal and professional life.
- What did you learn about project management skills? This builds a sense of responsibility and applied learning, preparing youth to lead, plan and organize in future opportunities.
- 10. Why is it important to have plenty of information before making decisions? This reinforces intentional decision-making and the ability to evaluate sources and consequences — important skills in both civic and workforce engagement.
- What did you learn about your own skill in communicating with others? This supports prosocial orientation, positive emotions and growth mindset, highlighting personal strengths and areas for continued growth.

18.3.3.3 Coaching Tips for Caring Adults

Consider these tips when asking youth these questions:

- Ask open-ended questions that invite personal reflection, not just facts.
- Make space for silence youth may need time to think deeply.
- Use follow-up prompts like "Tell me more," "Why do you think that is?" or "What makes you say that?" to deepen reflection.
- Tie skills to real-world roles whether in school, sports, jobs or leadership.
- Encourage youth to explore new questions or areas of interest that emerge from their reflection — this is the seed of lifelong learning.

18.3.4 Apply: Turning Learning Into Action

The Apply step of the Experiential Learning Model invites youth to take their experience and use it to shape what they do next. It's not just about wrapping up—it's about launching forward with purpose.

This stage supports youth in recognizing the real-world value of their growth, applying what they've learned to new situations and identifying how they can continue building on their skills. It's the bridge between experience and lifelong impact — aligned with the 4-H Thriving Model indicators like goal setting and management, hopeful purpose, transcendent awareness and prosocial orientation.

Supportive adults can use this moment to reinforce that 4-H is not just about the project or contest — it's about who youth are becoming and how they choose to grow from here.

18.3.4.1 Apply Questions: Launching Growth Into the Future

- 1. Where else might you apply the skills you learned from this experience - in school, your club, at work or in relationships? This encourages goal setting, transferable skill awareness and real-world readiness.
- 2. How could this impact others in your community or your family? This reinforces prosocial orientation and helps youth consider their role in supporting and improving their surroundings.
- 3. How might what you learned be used to teach others, encourage others or help you lead others? This promotes hopeful purpose and a desire to make a positive difference.
- 4. What values or beliefs does this connect to for you? This supports transcendent awareness, helping youth connect learning to deeper personal meaning such as responsibility, kindness or perseverance.
- 5. How can you use this learning to help others? Yourself? This highlights both self-efficacy and social contribution, encouraging youth to act with intention.
- 6. What qualities do you think are important for a leader? A team player? This builds self-awareness, growth mindset and a clearer vision of their own leadership style.
- 7. What would you like to learn or do next? This aligns with goal setting and management, empowering youth to envision their next step and stay future-focused.
- 8. How will you act differently in the future as a result of this experience? This reinforces growth mindset and reflective thinking, encouraging youth to change and grow through what they've learned.
- 9. What can you do to help yourself keep learning? This supports openness to discovery and helps youth build personal responsibility for continued growth.
- 10. If someone helped or mentored you with this project or in this experience, what would you tell them you learned and the difference their time and energy made in helping you? This promotes gratitude, prosocial orientation and deeper understanding of mentorship and relationship-building.

11. How might you share your project or what you have learned with your community, friends, school, or 4-H club? This builds hopeful purpose, positive emotions and encourages youth voice — as they inspire others and amplify their impact.

18.3.4.2 Coaching for Purposeful Growth

This stage helps youth accomplish the following:

- Reflect on who they are becoming, not just what they've completed
- · Set meaningful goals that connect to real life
- Recognize the role of others in their journey (and their own role in others' growth)
- Feel confident about their next step
- Practice sharing their story, which reinforces their learning and builds leadership

18.3.4.3 Why It Matters

This final phase of the Experiential Learning Model helps youth achieve the following:

- · Make decisions rooted in values and purpose
- Recognize and apply life skills across different settings
- Build confidence in their ability to contribute and lead
- Feel empowered to keep learning, growing and giving back

This is how to prepare Beyond Ready youth — by guiding them to reflect deeply, connect broadly and take intentional next steps toward a thriving life.

18.3.5 Quality PYD Matters

By using the Experiential Learning Model, leaders are not just creating activities — they're creating growth. This model helps youth achieve the following:

- · Gain confidence in their abilities
- · Learn from mistakes and try again
- Engage in teamwork and peer learning
- · Reflect on values, motivations, and goals
- · Connect their learning to real life and future aspirations
- Feel heard, supported and motivated to grow

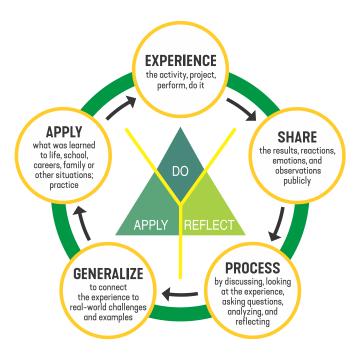
At the same time, volunteers and staff become facilitators of learning, not just teachers — fostering relationships and guiding youth through self-discovery, critical thinking and personal leadership.

18.3.6 How to Use It in 4-H

- Plan with purpose: Start with the skill or thriving outcome to be fostered.
- Design hands-on learning: Let youth lead and make real choices.
- Facilitate reflection: Use open-ended questions to draw out learning and emotions.
- Support application: Help youth see how their learning connects to the world around them.
- Repeat and build: Learning deepens when the cycle continues with new layers of experience and reflection.

18.3.7 Evaluating for Growth and Impact

A critical step in any 4-H program is evaluating what youth have gained. Use the Experiential Learning Model to help assess youth development outcomes — such as confidence, skill-building, goal setting and engagement. This evidence not only strengthens your local programs but also helps demonstrate the value and impact of 4-H to stakeholders and supporters.



PYD References:

- Arnold, M. (2018). From Context to Outcomes: A Thriving Model for 4-H Youth Development Programs. Journal of Human Sciences and Extension, 6(1), 141-160.
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- University of Minnesota Extension. (2019). Experiential Learning Guide: A guide for 4-H judges, volunteers, mentors and coaches, 4-H.umn.edu.
- University of Wisconsin 4-H Division of Extension. (2020). Experiential Learning Model: lesson. Adapted from research by Kolb, D. (1974). Organizational Psychology. Englewood Cliffs, MF: Prentice-Hall; and Pfeiffer, J. W., & Jones, J. E., Eds. (1985). Reference guide to handbooks and annuals (revised). San Diego: University Associates Publishers.

18.4 Beyond Ready Preparation: **Equipping a Ready Generation**

North Dakota 4-H is committed to preparing youth to be Beyond Ready — equipped with the skills, confidence and character needed to thrive in an ever-changing world. This means creating opportunities where youth grow as leaders, problem-solvers and contributors to their communities.

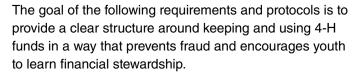
To support high-quality Positive Youth Development (PYD), all 4-H professionals and volunteers are encouraged to intentionally design programs and experiences using the Beyond Ready Program Checklist. This tool provides a framework to ensure that learning opportunities achieve the following:

- Foster belonging, independence, generosity and mastery
- · Are youth-driven and adult-supported
- · Build workforce readiness, communication and leadership skills
- Promote healthy relationships and emotional well-
- Include opportunities to reflect, apply and lead

When planning activities, events or programs, teams must review the checklist as part of their preparation process. This ensures alignment with the outcomes strived for in 4-H and reinforces the responsibility to raise a generation that is ready — not just for the next opportunity, but for life.

Together, 4-H is investing in a ready generation — one that is healthy, productive and engaged.

19.4-H Councils and Clubs Finances and Taxes 🛕 0



Federal regulations governing the use of the 4-H Name and Emblem require annual financial reporting/ accountability of all organized 4-H units. Funds raised in the name of 4-H must be publicly accountable and used for 4-H purposes. Basic money management principles for publicly funded groups help maintain the integrity of 4-H, ensuring that the program meets the needs of youth and protects the integrity of those involved.

19.1 Abiding by Local, State and Federal Tax Laws

4-H is a public-private partnership with federal, state, local and nonprofit support. As a result, the 4-H Name and Emblem are protected by federal law. Therefore, funds donated to or raised in the name of 4-H or to 4-H programs under the name of 4-H must receive the same accountability as required in the handling of public or tax funds. Members of 4-H councils and clubs are obligated to document financial activity in accordance with state law and to follow protocols from the USDA, NDSU Extension and the North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program.

19.2 Purpose and Acceptable Usage of Funds

Funds raised under the 4-H Name and Emblem must be used for educational purposes. All 4-H funds, received from various sources, are intended for the benefit of all 4-H participants.

4-H funds must be invested in youth within the community, including, but not limited to, educational and camp scholarships, national trip funding, day camps, clinics, activities, events, 4-H volunteer training, 4-H contests and other opportunities and experiences helping youth build essential life skills and empowering all youth in the community to find their spark and reach their full potential.

19.2.1 Examples of Acceptable and Unacceptable Usage of Funds

Consult a local Extension office for fund-spending guidance.

Acceptable ways to spend club funds include the following:

- Attending an educational tour or workshop open to all members
- Conducting a fundraising or service activity where proceeds benefit a nonprofit organization (giving check to the organization, buying gifts/food to deliver to a sponsored family, etc.)
- Contributing to a fair improvement project
- Paying for club member camperships (as long as all members are eligible to attend are included, it is approved by club members and payment is sent directly to whoever is collecting funds for the camp)
- Paying for a guest speaker or presenter to attend a club meeting
- Paying for an end-of-year recognition banquet for all members
- Paying judge fees for events
- Paying for gas money for advisors who drive on a trip, where it was voted on and approved by the club and included in the minutes
- Purchasing club apparel for all members
- Purchasing club books for all members
- Sponsoring countywide awards and/or trips

Prohibited ways to spend club/affiliate funds include the

- Purchasing alcohol, tobacco, vaping, or other illegal drugs
- Paying an individual (cash or gift cards) unless it is a receipt of reimbursement for an approved club purchase or pre-advertised with all members eligible for a scholarship or other competition. Qualifications must be in writing, voted on and approved by the club and included in the minutes. This includes giving members cash to spend at the fair. Coupons for sandwiches at the fair booth are acceptable as long as all club members receive them, the coupons are

voted on and approved by club membership and the coupons are included in the club minutes.

Political campaigns

19.2.2 Contracts and Documentation for **Service Payments**

All payments for services — including judges, proxy bidders and coaches — must be accompanied by a written agreement or contract, even if the service is informal or a one-time occurrence. This helps ensure transparency, accountability and proper documentation of how 4-H public funds are used.

Contracts are essential when using public or councilraised funds because they establish the following:

- The purpose of the payment
- The amount and scope of the service
- · Who performed the service and when
- A paper trail that protects both the individual and the organization during audits

A simple service contract example: "Bison Thunder served as a judge for static exhibits at the 2025 Nelson County 4-H Achievement Day and received \$50 for his service."

Even if the payment is a gesture of appreciation (e.g., \$1,000 to a coach "for doing a good job") or given in the form of a gift card, it still counts as income and must be treated as such:

- · It requires a contract.
- It is subject to IRS 1099-MISC reporting if the total compensation from 4-H funds exceeds \$600 in a calendar year.
- It must be approved by the 4-H Council and recorded in the minutes.

Gift cards are treated the same as cash by the IRS. A \$1,000 gift card to someone as a thank-you is taxable income and still requires proper documentation and potentially a 1099 form.

Best practice: When in doubt, write it down. Keep contracts on file, document decisions in council meeting minutes and work closely with the local Extension office to ensure proper procedures are followed.

19.2.3 4-H Excess Funds and Five-year Plan

Funds raised and held by 4-H councils and clubs must be used to support the youth of their community in meaningful ways. While a piece of sound financial management is having an emergency fund, councils or clubs with an annual accrual or carry-over of funds exceeding \$30,000 must consider how to put these excess funds to work for their community. If the current balance of a county 4-H council/club exceeds \$30,000 in its account at the end of the 4-H year, a five-year plan must be submitted to the Extension county agent to spend down excess funds relating to a specific 4-H Youth Development goal to be accomplished in five years.

The five-year plan must have specific steps and deadlines to be accomplished in each of its five fiscal years. The goal must describe what funds will be used for and include what the youth will gain as a result of the use of funds. Plans can exceed five years if active fundraising is occurring. If the fundraising for the five-year plan is no longer occurring, these funds raised in the name of 4-H are required to be utilized in a different capacity.

For an example sheet, see Five-year Financial Plan in the Appendix.

Specific Steps to Accomplish Goals:

Specific Step (add steps as needed)	Date to be accomplished	Individual responsible	Signature to sign off step was completed

19.2.4 Temporary Investments

Certificates of deposits, also called CDs, offer a savings tool with varying interest rates and are acceptable temporary investments but must be accompanied by a plan of implementation. All CDs must be declared in year-end financials. All CDs must be established at an FDIC (Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation) or NCUA (National Credit Union Administration) insured institution. CDs are reported as temporary investments similar to a savings account and must be reported with the year-end financial report with a savings account.

The submitted plan for CD(s) must include the following:

- Goal for educational purposes
- Copy of secretary's notes of approved vote and action
- Action steps
- What will youth gain from the funds being in a CD
- Timeline

CDs over five years need re-evaluation with a new plan established and voted on.

If a 4-H club or council utilized a Money Market, the below is required:

- The account must be FDIC-insured.
- · It must align with the educational and fiduciary mission of 4-H.
 - Must meet all requirements for funds raised in the name of 4-H.
 - Interest income must be transparently reported.
 - Decisions to open or maintain such accounts must be made collaboratively.
 - The account must not involve any investments that could be perceived as speculative or contrary to public trust.
- Appropriate documentation and transparency must be maintained.
- Funds must not sit idle or unused for more than 12 months without a documented plan for use, as this may raise concerns during audits or stakeholder reviews about whether 4-H resources are actively supporting today's youth. Maintaining an actionoriented budget and a written plan for fund usage ensures resources are working toward the timely advancement of 4-H educational opportunities.
- A clear statement of financial intent must be documented, outlining the purpose of the money market account and how any interest earned will be used to support 4-H programming and education. This statement must be signed and dated by the 4-H club leader and kept on file for auditing purposes.

Mutual funds, stocks, cryptocurrency, non-FDIC insured accounts that fluctuate with market volatility or are tied to private investment firms, bonds or other investment accounts are prohibited. Funds raised in the name of 4-H are intended to directly and immediately benefit the current youth involved in the program. These types of investments typically involve long-term financial commitments, which can delay the available funds needed to support ongoing 4-H activities. The money needs to be revolving and readily accessible to address the immediate needs of the youth, ensuring that the funds are used promptly and effectively to enhance their 4-H experience. Investing in long-term accounts could hinder this goal and divert resources from the current generation of 4-H participants.

Bottom Line: While financial stewardship is important, the primary goal of 4-H funds is to make a difference in the lives of young people, not to accrue interest. Keeping funds accessible and responsive to current needs ensures they are used where they matter most: in support of meaningful, hands-on youth development experiences for today's youth.

19.2.5 4-H Funds Raised for Structures/ **Buildings**

Money raised in the name of 4-H for structures or buildings or any other assets not directly considered educational or programmatically related must have a fiveyear implementation plan. The plan must include benefits it will provide to 4-H youth, families, the location (i.e., fair) and the community.

19.2.6 Premium Sales

Opportunities for 4-H member recognition, such as premium sales, are determined and managed at the local level. The North Dakota 4-H program expects Extension county staff to collaborate with local stakeholders - such as buyers, 4-H members and their families, a 4-H council, and other volunteer leadership groups — to effectively implement these opportunities.

In the context of 4-H premium sales, Extension county staff must clearly communicate regulations regarding the use of the 4-H Name and Emblem, as well as relevant federal tax laws, IRS regulations, and other legal or fiduciary responsibilities. Resources and fact sheets are available through the Center for 4-H Youth Development and the USDA NIFA 4-H Headquarters website to support compliance and best practices.

Funds from premium sales — whether for livestock or other projects — must be managed by an external,

authorized entity, such as a fair association or a bank account managed by a qualified organization that is permitted to handle public funds. A 4-H council or Extension agent must not serve as the repository or fiscal agent for premium sale funds.

If counties are unable to secure an authorized external entity to manage premium sale funds, they are fully responsible for complying with all federal reporting requirements, including filing 1099 forms with the IRS. Failure to do so could result in significant liability for the county and jeopardize the integrity of the 4-H program.

Clear separation of funds, proper fiscal management, and transparent documentation are critical not only to protect 4-H youth and their families but also to ensure compliance with university and federal regulations.

19.2.7 Auctions

Participation in a 4-H auction or premium sale is both a privilege and a learning experience that helps youth develop responsibility, integrity and financial literacy. When a youth enters an auction or premium sale, they are making a formal commitment to complete the sale transaction. Following through on this commitment is an essential part of developing important life skills such as accountability, business ethics and follow-through.

By participating in an auction or premium sale, youth gain valuable experience in ethical decision-making, financial responsibility, customer relations and business transactions.

This policy ensures fairness to buyers, reinforces the importance of commitment and maintains the credibility of the 4-H auction and premium sale process.

19.2.7.1 Commitment to Sale

Once a youth's project has been entered into an auction or premium sale and has been sold, the sale is final.

Youth who enter an auction or premium sale are required to complete the transaction and deliver the product, livestock, or agreed-upon item to the buyer as per the sale terms.

Any youth choosing to withdraw from the sale after the auction concludes or failing to provide the item as promised must submit a formal written explanation to the 4-H auction committee.

19.2.7.2 Consequences for Noncommitment

To uphold the integrity of the program, youth who fail to honor their sale commitments may face the following consequences:

- Forfeiture of future sale participation: Youth may be ineligible to participate in next year's auction or premium sale.
- Repayment of any auction or sale proceeds: If funds were exchanged, youth must return payments to the buver.
- Review by 4-H auction committee: Further action may be determined at the discretion of the 4-H auction committee, including potential restrictions on participation in other 4-H market projects.

19.3 Ownership of Funds

4-H is a public organization. 4-H is open to any youth within eligibility parameters, and the organization is accountable for all funds received from donations, dues, fundraising or other sources. Club bylaws must include an article related to club dues. Funds received from dues, fundraising, county appropriations and other sources are 4-H property intended to benefit all 4-H participants. No single member, volunteer or committee owns these funds.

19.4 Fundraising

The 4-H council and 4-H club(s) must have an intended and declared purpose for fundraising efforts.

The **4-H Name and Emblem** are federally protected by an act of Congress. With this protection comes very specific fundraising protocols. Any fundraising program using the 4-H Name and Emblem must be conducted in compliance with federal USDA protocols.

Any use of the 4-H Name or Emblem is forbidden if it exploits the 4-H program, 4-H participants or volunteers, the USDA, NDSU Extension or the land-grant institution and its employees. Fundraising programs using the 4-H in name or its emblem may be carried out for specific educational purposes. Such fundraising activities must be approved by the appropriate entity as follows:

- Approval by the county NDSU Extension office (via the 4-H Youth Development Extension contact) if the fundraising activity is to be carried out in a single county.
- Approval by the assistant director of NDSU Extension 4-H Youth Development Program if the activity is to be carried out on a multicounty level or statewide.

Each organization must be able to show proof of its authorization to use the 4-H Name and Emblem.

For a 4-H club, a 4-H charter signed by State Extension Officials indicating the group is organized in accordance with 4-H program objectives is sufficient.

For a 4-H Youth Development Council, a current and signed Memorandum of Understanding with the Extension county office is evidence of a group's authorization to use the 4-H Name and Emblem.

19.4.1 Gaming Funds



North Dakota 4-H will not participate in gaming functions except for a raffle or bingo.

A raffle is a game where a prize is won by a player who bought a raffle ticket or square on a raffle board.

Other gaming events may not represent the program's positive 4-H Youth Development ideals or NDSU Extension. Contact the state 4-H office to identify whether the activity is acceptable. Careful consideration must be given in the decision-making of raffle items to determine the suitability of fundraising to reflect positive youth development, the image of 4-H and the mission of 4-H.

19.4.2 Gaming Permit

A local gaming permit (found on the North Dakota Attorney General website) is required to host a raffle and bingo. When applying for a local gaming permit, contact the city or county police or auditor, depending on the location of the drawing or game.

Required information to be printed on raffle tickets includes the following:

- Site/address
- Date
- Time
- Raffle Permit Number

Two people must be present when pulling raffle tickets.

Raffles must be open to the public. Streaming online is acceptable.

If holding a gaming permit, there are no additional tax requirements needed.

19.4.3 Recipient of Gaming Funds

According to North Dakota Century Code Chapter 53-06.1 Games of Chance, in North Dakota, an "educational organization" can be the recipient of gaming funds. North Dakota 4-H falls under educational use (code C-40).

Refer to the National 4-H Headquarters' message regarding gaming in Raffles, Lotteries, Gaming and 4-H.

19.5 4-H Councils for Procuring, Storing and Dispersing Funds

This section of the handbook is intended to assist 4-H councils in their responsibilities for the accountability of all funds under their purview. The leadership of the 4-H council must to adhere to these requirements and protocols.

19.5.1 4-H Councils for Procuring, Storing and Dispersing Funds Requirements

The following policy is required of all 4-H councils to follow closely.

19.5.1.1 Revenues and the Procurement of Funds

The 4-H council is authorized to generate revenue to support awards, scholarships, travel or other 4-H council and 4-H club activities, events and programs.

The 4-H council treasurer is responsible for managing funds as authorized by the 4-H council and the mission of the 4-H Youth Development Program.

Revenue to support these activities can come from various sources and vary by type, including county 4-H member enrollment fees, fundraising, grants or gifts. Funds are available through public and private resources.

Public resources come from local tax dollars the county government allocates to support the local 4-H program. These are typically allocated through a budget request made by NDSU Extension staff.

Private resources are obtained from individuals, families, estates and businesses through donations, bequests, grants and fundraisers.

19.5.1.2 4-H Council Dissolution of Funds

If the 4-H council loses its 4-H Charter or is otherwise dissolved, all funds remaining will be transferred to the local NDSU Extension office where the 4-H Charter was held. In the event that the entire 4-H program dissolves, all funds will go to the state 4-H office until that county can rebuild its leadership and 4-H program.

19.5.1.3 Storage and Dispersal of Funds

With the oversight from the NDSU Extension agent, 4-H councils may establish accounts at Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC)- or National Credit Union Administration (NCUA)-insured institutions. This option includes using savings accounts, checking accounts and certificates of deposit.

- Treasurer and committee support: The funds raised by the 4-H council are to be handled by the 4-H council treasurer with assistance and support from the budget and finance committee.
- Checking account: It is required that 4-H councils
 maintain funds in their own checking account named
 for the 4-H council and under the council's EIN number
 at an FDIC-insured institution. Funds are not to be held
 privately within a physical place such as a desk over five
 days.
- **Dual check signatures:** All accounts holding 4-H funds require two signatures of unrelated individuals.
 - Checks must never be pre-signed.
 - Authorized signatures must be updated each time a new treasurer is elected or when leadership changes in the council/club. A copy of the meeting minutes documenting the change of role must be shown to the bank along with the change request.
- Account oversight: For any account exceeding \$10,000, councils will be required to have a member of the Extension county staff added to the account with the ability to serve as a signer to oversee financials.
 If possible, the county-paid staff, not NDSU-paid staff, must be on the account as an overseer. When a county does not have county-paid staff, the NDSU-paid staff is acceptable.
- Annual financial statement: Because program oversight comes from NDSU Extension, a county 4-H council must complete the Annual Financial Statement to show how they are spending money on the local 4-H program.
- Good standing: All 4-H councils are required to be in good standing with the IRS and the North Dakota Secretary of State.
- IRS EIN: County 4-H councils must file with the IRS for an individual EIN number.
- Prompt deposits: Funds must be deposited promptly in the official 4-H checking/savings account after they have been received. Funds must never be kept outside of the financial institution unless change is being used for an activity or event and must be deposited within five days after the activity or event.
- Regular financial reports: Regular reports of the status of all 4-H funds must be made to the council by the treasurer.
- Declared fundraising purpose: The 4-H council must have an intended and declared purpose for fundraising efforts.

- Transparency: The 4-H council must be as transparent as possible in all business, including releasing information to the public.
- **Documentation:** All receipts and disbursements must be documented within a five-year span.
- Confidentiality: NDSU Extension employees, other 4-H
 personnel and 4-H council members must be sensitive
 to the confidentiality of the financial information they
 possess when carrying out duties.
- Conflict of interest: Every effort must be made to avoid potential conflict of interest issues.
- Personal accounts: Personal accounts of any kind are not acceptable.

19.5.2 4-H Councils for Procuring, Storing and Dispersing Funds Best Practices



4-H Councils play a vital role in supporting youth development by managing financial resources responsibly and transparently. As stewards of funds raised or received on behalf of 4-H programs, councils must follow sound financial practices to ensure accountability, compliance with policies and sustainability of funds for future programming.

This section outlines best practices to help councils operate with integrity and align with NDSU Extension and 4-H fiscal policies.

19.5.2.1 Tax Status

A 4-H council must be in good tax standing with the IRS and the secretary of state. This also includes submitting all clubs and council financial statements to the NDSU Extension office at the local level. For further guidance, see Filing Taxes.

19.5.2.2 Budgeting and Oversight

Before seeking funds, the 4-H council must prepare an annual program budget that details the projected income and expenses for the Sept. 1 to Aug. 31 4-H fiscal year. The budget will provide the 4-H council with guidance regarding allocating expenses and when additional resources are needed. Setting goals and documenting planned details also helps to generate content to celebrate and illustrate the impact 4-H is having on the community.

19.5.2.3 Fund Handling Best Practices



Collaboration with NDSU Extension staff: The 4-H
council treasurer may collaborate with NDSU Extension
staff to assist with the 4-H council's bookkeeping.

- Segregation of duties: Ensure that no single individual controls all aspects of any significant financial transaction. This includes separating the responsibilities of authorizing transactions, recording transactions and maintaining custody of assets.
- Periodic reconciliations: Perform regular reconciliations of bank statements with internal records to identify and resolve discrepancies promptly.
- Physical security: Implement physical security measures such as locked safes for cash, checks and other financial documents, and restrict access to authorized personnel only.
- Background checks: Conduct thorough background checks on people handling funds to ensure they have a clean financial and criminal record. Keep in mind that approved 4-H volunteers complete background checks every three years.
- Financial training: Provide additional training to all individuals handling funds on proper financial procedures, fraud prevention and ethical standards.
- Cash handling policies: Develop and enforce strict cash handling policies, including procedures for cash collections, deposits and petty cash management to minimize the risk of theft or loss.
- Document retention policies: Documents (including receipts, invoices and bank statements) must be retained for 10 years to ensure that all financial records are maintained appropriately and easily accessible for audits and reviews.
- Access controls: Use strong access controls for financial systems, including unique user IDs and passwords, to ensure that only authorized personnel can access sensitive financial data.
- Approval hierarchies: Develop and adapt council bylaws around different levels of approval spending to add a layer of oversight. This may look like a simple majority for transactions below \$1000, a two-thirds majority for transactions over \$1000 and a bylaw that transactions exceeding \$5,000 must be voted on and passed with a two-thirds majority at two separate council meetings.
- Expense reimbursement policies: Establish clear policies and procedures for expense reimbursements, including requiring original receipts, detailed explanations of expenses and timely submission of reimbursement requests.
- Hiring external tax preparer: Counties may require dues from clubs that are used to having an external licensed professional prepare taxes for the council and clubs of a county.

• Hiring external auditor: Every three years, a council may hire an external auditor to reconcile all 4-H affiliated accounts across the county.

19.6 Procedure for 4-H Clubs Procuring, Storing and **Dispersing Funds**

Money management is a learning opportunity for youth; however, funds must be handled utilizing the following quidance.

19.6.1 4-H Clubs Procuring, Storing and Dispersing Funds Requirements

- EIN requirement: Checking/savings accounts are opened with a unique employer identification number (EIN) obtained from the IRS. A club may fall under a countywide council and use their EIN. In that circumstance, all clubs under the same EIN must all file for taxes collectively.
- Official accounts: All 4-H funds shall be kept in an official FDIC-insured financial institution under the 4-H council or 4-H club name and never set up in a personal account (i.e., funds are not to be held privately within a physical place such as a desk over a period of five days).
- Two signatures of nonrelated individuals: All accounts require two signatures of unrelated individuals.
 - Three signatures: For any account exceeding \$10,000, clubs will be required to have a member of the Extension county staff listed as a third signer after Sept. 1, 2026.
 - The treasurer, another club officer or a club advisor could serve in this role.
 - Checks must never be pre-signed.
 - Some banks have implemented new policies that do not allow youth under 18 years to sign checks. In this case, the club must still elect a treasurer who will fulfill the remaining tasks, including, but not limited to, preparing the financial reports (monthly and annual), writing the checks and balancing the bank statements.
 - It is not recommended that a parent and child from the same family be co-signers.
 - Authorized signatures must be updated each time a new treasurer is elected or when leadership changes in the club.

- Club dues and activity fees: If charging club dues and/or activity fees, list the exact amount in the 4-H club bylaws and include how dues/fees will benefit the membership.
- Declared fundraising purpose: The 4-H club must have an intended and declared purpose for fundraising efforts and must register the fundraising efforts with the local NDSU Extension office.
- Prompt deposits: Funds must be deposited promptly in the official 4-H checking/savings account after they have been received. Funds must never be kept outside of the financial institution — unless change is being used for an activity or event — and must be deposited within five days after the activity or event.
- Written receipts: Official, written receipts must include the source of funds, the date and the name of the person from whom the funds were obtained.
- Expense payment methods: Payments (e.g., club paying bills or expenses) must primarily be made by check. Cash payments are not permitted. Debit/ credit cards are allowed with preapproval and proper documentation from an Extension county agent.
- Trackable transactions: All financial transactions related to the 4-H club must be easily tracked and identified and may occur by check, debit card or money order.
- Approved expenditures: Money must be spent only on items included in the approved 4-H club budget or after the 4-H group formally approves an unbudgeted expenditure.
- Receipt management: Maintain a list of receipts and expenses and original purchases receipts.
- Monthly reconciliation: Reconciliation must be done monthly, cross-referencing all deposits and payments with appropriate documentation (such as receipts, disbursement approvals and check register).
- Treasurer's report: Present an updated, accurate treasurer's report at each meeting.
- Donation receipts: Provide an official receipt for each donation received.
- **Record security:** Maintain secure and safe records for at least 10 years. Keep all records of donor contributions indefinitely.
- Annual financial statement: Submit the annual financial statement to the NDSU Extension agent with 4-H responsibility by Sept. 15.

- IRS Form 990 filing: File an IRS Form 990 series return by Sept. 15 annually (unless the clubs are filing under a council.
- Fundraising compliance: Conduct fundraising programs using the 4-H Name and Emblem in compliance with USDA protocols (see 4-H Iconography).

19.6.1.1 4-H Club Dissolution of Funds

If the 4-H club loses its 4-H charter or is otherwise dissolved, all funds remaining will be transferred to the local 4-H council where the 4-H charter was held.

19.6.2 4-H Clubs Procuring, Storing and **Dispersing Funds Best Practices**



- Annual financial budget: Establish and follow an approved annual financial budget to track income and expenses.
- Bonding/insurance requirement: For clubs or affiliates with more than \$50,000 gross annual receipts, the treasurer must be bonded/insured.
- Income documentation: Income/club receipts (such as members paying club dues or receiving payment for fundraisers) must be documented. Receipts must be provided and kept with financial records.
- Deposit procedures: Cash received must be counted by two unrelated persons. One person must prepare the deposit, and the other must make the deposit. Keep deposit forms with financial records.
- Expense documentation: The purpose of the expenditure must be written on the memo line of all checks. Itemized receipts must be provided, and data must be properly recorded in the ledger.
- Financial statement/audits: Conduct the annual financial statement and a full audit every three years. Record findings in club meeting minutes and use recommended audit procedures.
- Fundraising protocols: Ensure fundraising and club spending purposes are educational in nature. Limit carryover funds based on gross annual receipts and intended spending plans.
- 501c3 consideration: Clubs raising over \$10,000 annually may apply for a 501c3 status (Form 1023-EZ) for tax-exempt operation.
- Donor thank-you notes: Send thank-you notes to donors promptly, preferably within 10 business days of receiving the donation. Periodic updates on fund usage may be appropriate for larger donations.

19.7 Filing Taxes

Proper filing for the IRS and the state is required to remain in good standing. All tax guidance and forms are located on the 4-H Google Drive in the Taxes Folder. All financial documents must be turned in and required tax filings must be done by September 15 of the current year.

The How to File Club Taxes and Financial Records document serves as guidance in this folder and includes the following:

- · Guidance for obtaining an EIN
- Guidance for obtaining 501c3 status (Form 1023-EZ)
- Guidance for submitting Form 990
- State filing requirements
- An Annual Financial Statement template
- In-Kind letter example
- Treasurer's Record Book
- Taxes FAQs

19.7.1 Tax Requirements

If the 4-H council or 4-H club raises more than \$25,000, the 4-H club or council is still required to file Form 990, **Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax** or Form 990-EZ, Short Form Return of Organization **Exempt From Income Tax.**

If the 4-H council or 4-H club raises less than \$25,000 but more than \$0, the 4-H club or council is required to file Form 990-N, Electronic Notice (e-Postcard) for Tax-**Exempt Organizations Not Required to File Form 990** or Form 990-EZ.

If the 4-H council or 4-H club doesn't raise any money but plans to raise funds in the future and wish to retain inclusion under the North Dakota 4-H Foundation Group Exemption Number, the 4-H club or council is required to file Form 990-N, Electronic Notice (e-Postcard) for Tax-**Exempt Organizations Not Required to File Form 990** or Form 990-EZ.

If the 4-H council or 4-H club raises \$0 with no plans to raise funds, the 4-H club or council is not required to file.

19.7.2 Form W-9

A Form W-9 must be completed by any individual receiving at least \$600 within a calendar year (Jan. 1 to Dec. 31) from a 4-H council or 4-H club. For instance, state fair award premiums often exceed this amount. These payments must be reported to the IRS, and the Form W-9 serves as proof of payment to the recipient. Sometimes, businesses request a completed Form W-9 from a 4-H group to confirm they have donated funds

to a nonprofit organization. A Form W-9 is necessary to generate a Form 1099-MISC. Typically, a Form W-9 is filled out once and securely stored in a locked location.

19.7.3 Form 1099-MISC

A Form 1099-MISC is issued as proof that a 4-H council or 4-H club has paid an individual at least \$600 within a calendar year (Jan. 1 to Dec. 31). This requirement applies to various 4-H payments such as prizes, showcase awards, competition proceeds and cash door prizes of at least \$600 to a single individual. When a 4-H council pays an individual at least \$600 throughout a tax year, it must report these payments to the IRS using Form 1099-MISC. For instance, paying a 4-H'er a premium award of at least \$600 would require such reporting.

19.8 Monetary Assets

4-H Councils and affiliated clubs may acquire nonmonetary assets such as equipment, supplies, or other donated goods to support 4-H programs. While these assets do not involve direct financial transactions. they hold significant value and must be tracked to ensure accountability, transparency and proper stewardship of resources.

Maintaining accurate records of nonmonetary assets is essential:

- Auditing and compliance: Ensuring alignment with NDSU Extension and 4-H financial policies, IRS regulations and donor agreements.
- Asset management: Preventing loss, misuse or unauthorized disposal of 4-H property.
- Program sustainability: Supporting long-term planning by tracking available resources.
- Insurance and liability: Verifying asset ownership and proper use for protection in case of loss, damage or legal concerns.

Councils must document, store and periodically review nonmonetary assets using an inventory system. Any transfer, sale or disposal of assets must follow established policies, with oversight to maintain 4-H's integrity and mission-driven use of resources.

19.8.1 Equipment

4-H councils and 4-H clubs must keep an inventory of all equipment purchased, including the item, cost, date of purchase and storage location over \$100. An inventory review must be conducted annually.

Take caution when accepting items such as trailers, machinery and other equipment. These must be discussed with the 4-H council and require approval from the NDSU Extension agent.

19.8.2 Other Property



A 4-H council or 4-H club must not own property (i.e., land or buildings).

19.8.3 Use of the 4-H Name, Emblem, and **Guidance for Physical Property**

To maintain alignment with NDSU Extension, the USDA and national 4-H policies, 4-H clubs, councils and affiliated groups must not independently own real property (i.e., land or buildings). Ownership of such property carries significant liability, legal and financial responsibilities that may exceed the scope and capacity of volunteer-led 4-H structures.

19.8.3.1 1. Use of the 4-H Name and Emblem on **Buildings or Facilities**

- The 4-H name and emblem are federally protected and must be used only with proper approval and consistent with the mission of 4-H youth development.
- Any use of the 4-H name or emblem on a physical building (e.g., signage, promotional materials, naming rights) must:
 - Be reviewed and approved by the Extension county office and state 4-H office.
 - Clearly indicate whether the building is a shared-use facility that hosts 4-H programming — not implied to be owned or solely operated by 4-H.
 - Include disclaimer language, if necessary, to avoid misrepresentation of ownership or formal affiliation.

Example: "This facility supports 4-H programming and youth development activities in partnership with NDSU Extension."

19.8.3.2 2. Existing Ownership of **Land or Buildings**



If a 4-H council or club currently owns a building or land (acquired prior to this policy clarification), the following steps must be taken to ensure legal compliance, financial sustainability and alignment with 4-H policy:

- · Document ownership and liability:
 - Ensure the asset is listed on the annual inventory submitted to the Extension county office.
 - Verify that appropriate liability and property insurance is in place.

- Clarify who is responsible for operational costs (utilities, insurance, repairs, inspections, etc.). The 4-H club or council must avoid being responsible for these kinds of recurring costs if possible.
- Evaluate sustainability and risk:
 - Conduct a formal review at least every three years to assess whether continued ownership is sustainable and mission-aligned.
 - Consider the following:
 - Annual fundraising required to support upkeep
 - Leadership capacity and succession planning
 - Alternative models such as community partnerships, transfer of ownership or long-term leases

The following is guidance for divestment or dissolution:

- If a council or club chooses to sell, lease or transfer ownership of land or buildings the following must be executed:
 - Notify the Extension county office and state 4-H program leader in writing.
 - Vote on the action at a public meeting with recorded minutes.
 - Ensure all proceeds from the sale are used for youth development purposes in alignment with the 4-H mission.
- If a club or council dissolves, the following must be executed:
 - Any physical property must be accompanied by documentation that aligns with local, state and federal laws.
 - The Extension agent will maintain the EIN for the 4-H
 - Documents must be legally transferred to the 4-H council.

19.9 Recommended Audit Procedure





Every three years, the financial records of the 4-H council and 4-H clubs with checking/savings accounts and/or pays out money must be audited by someone removed from the actual operations (i.e., the one spending or writing checks must not be doing the auditing). A CPA, an officer of the bank or a financial audit committee may be used. Always conduct a financial audit when transferring responsibility from one person to another to protect both parties. For example, when a new treasurer takes office. An audit ensures that all receipts for all income and expenses

are documented and verifies the beginning and ending balance. Conducting an audit prevents misunderstanding and protects the outgoing and incoming treasurers.

The purpose of a financial audit is to check procedures and the accuracy of the account. It is not a check for fraud, although fraud must be reported if found. Account records must be clear so a financial audit committee or others can understand the financial transactions. An audit is also an efficient way to update financial information and records if needed.

Who must do the audit?

The financial audit committee must be comprised of at least two people and must not include anyone directly related to the spending and receiving of finances for that year. One individual must be an approved 4-H volunteer. The committee must submit a written report signed by the committee to the 4-H council and/or 4-H club on the condition of the financial records.

What does the auditor need?

4-H Treasurer reconciles all accounts to close the fiscal year. 4-H Treasurer then assembles all receipts, bank statements, checkbook registers and other financial records. After that, the 4-H council and/or 4-H club will secure two auditors and organize a date for the audit.

The following is what the audit needs to be completed:

- Completed 4-H Annual Financial Report
 - Beginning balance and ending balance for checking and/or savings accounts
 - Income
 - Expenses
- · All financial records
 - Receipts
 - Bank statements
 - Copies or images of all checks written
 - Checkbook register
- Two signatures on the audit report confirming accuracy and/or noting any potential issues found

Submit audit report to NDSU Extension agent and current treasurer. Ensure documents are securely stored. An audit report must be given at the next meeting. No approval is needed.

Proper filing for the IRS and the state is required to remain in good standing. All tax guidance and forms are located on the 4-H Google Drive under the 4-H Clubs Folder > Club Management Folder > Taxes Folder.

19.10 Enforcement of Policies

The Extension agent in each county — specifically the 4-H contact or designated 4-H agent — is responsible for ensuring local adherence to all 4-H policies and procedures, including the proper management of 4-H funds.

Any 4-H council or club that fails to comply with required documentation or other applicable policies will receive a formal written warning. If corrective actions are not taken within the specified timeframe outlined in the warning, the club or council may be subject to dissolution and will no longer be permitted to operate under the 4-H name or utilize its privileges.

19.11 Concerns About a 4-H Group's Finances

If an individual or group expresses concern about the way a 4-H club/affiliate is spending its money, the person or group with the concern must put it in writing and give it to an NDSU Extension county agent. Then, the NDSU Extension county agent will investigate the alleged misuse of 4-H funds. The NDSU Extension county agent has the authority to require that groups submit their financial records to the NDSU Extension office at any time. Clubs and affiliates are encouraged to keep their records current and follow 4-H policies and procedures. This helps to get concerns settled in a timely fashion. If an individual or group expresses concern about how an NDSU Extension county agent is spending money, the person or group with the concern must put it in writing to the state 4-H office, which will investigate further.

19.12 Additional Resources

Handling Money in the North Dakota 4-H Program

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1clf3yRn9pXyo9px7 xBZgkPnhbB7WYZgs?usp=drive link

Fundraising: Private Support for the 4-H Program

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1clf3yRn9pXyo9px7 xBZgkPnhbB7WYZgs?usp=drive link

4-H Fundraising: Sponsorships and Promotions

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1clf3yRn9pXyo9px7 xBZgkPnhbB7WYZgs?usp=drive_link

Raffles, Lotteries Gaming and 4-H

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1clf3yRn9pXyo9px7 xBZgkPnhbB7WYZgs?usp=drive link

4-H Contest and Awards

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1clf3yRn9pXyo9px7 xBZgkPnhbB7WYZgs?usp=drive link

North Dakota 4-H Drive Taxes Folder

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1EBhbnnawjGrR9ga XuwzN1Tynk57Ww4bD?usp=drive link

How to File Your 4-H Council/Club's Taxes and Financial Records to be in Good Standing

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1EBhbnnawjGrR9ga XuwzN1Tynk57Ww4bD?usp=drive link

4-H EIN Instructions

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1EBhbnnawjGrR9ga XuwzN1Tynk57Ww4bD?usp=drive_link

North Dakota 4-H Annual Financial Statement

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1EBhbnnawjGrR9ga XuwzN1Tynk57Ww4bD?usp=drive link

Financial or in-kind documentation letter

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1EBhbnnawjGrR9ga XuwzN1Tynk57Ww4bD?usp=drive_link

North Dakota 4-H Tax and Financial Records Handouts

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1EBhbnnawjGrR9ga XuwzN1Tynk57Ww4bD?usp=drive link

North Dakota 4-H Treasurer's Record Book

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1EBhbnnawjGrR9ga XuwzN1Tynk57Ww4bD?usp=drive link

Taxes FAQs for North Dakota 4-H

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1EBhbnnawjGrR9ga XuwzN1Tynk57Ww4bD?usp=drive link

20. Youth Sales and Marketing Using the NDSU Extension Platform 🛕



NDSU Extension and the North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program are committed to supporting youth as they explore entrepreneurship, leadership, and project-based learning. However, the use of NDSU Extension platforms for personal or private business profit must be clearly defined to maintain public trust, identify conflicts of interest and uphold the educational mission of the 4-H organization.

20.1 Youth Entrepreneurship and 4-H

Youth-led business learning experiences are encouraged when they are educational in nature and meet the following criteria:

- The opportunity is county-approved and facilitated within a learning framework grounded in Positive Youth Development (PYD).
- The opportunity is youth-designed, youth-led, youthfacilitated and youth-engaged, with support and mentorship from a caring adult.
- All youth have equal opportunity to participate and benefit through a shared learning environment, such as a youth entrepreneurship fair or project showcase.

These educational experiences are intended to help youth learn about product development, marketing, budgeting, communication and business ethics through real-world application — not for direct commercial gain using NDSU Extension platforms.

20.2 Use of NDSU Extension Platforms for Sales

Youth may not sell items for personal profit using NDSU Extension platforms, including, but not limited to the following:

- · Official 4-H newsletters or websites
- · NDSU Extension social media pages
- · County or state 4-H listservs
- · County Extension offices or events, unless otherwise noted

20.3 Fundraising Exception

In cases where sales are tied to an approved 4-H fundraiser or group activity (e.g., club trip fundraising or a service-learning project), promotion through Extension platforms may be allowed on a case-by-case basis with appropriate approval, PYD learning framework and oversight.

20.4 External Business **Promotions**

4-H professionals may not broadly promote private or for-profit business marketing materials (e.g., show judges, sale flyers, discounts). Exceptions may apply only in the following cases:

- The business has an official, recognized partnership with National 4-H Council (e.g., Tractor Supply Company).
- The resource is requested by an individual and shared privately, with no endorsement implied.

A public bulletin board may be available for postings of this nature. If so, the following disclaimer must be clearly posted:

Disclaimer: This [event/resource/activity] is not a 4-H [event/resource/activity]. We are sharing this information as a convenience, not as an endorsement by North Dakota 4-H.

20.5 Sharing Nonprofit **Educational Resources**

External nonprofit resources that align with the mission of 4-H and PYD (e.g., American Camping Association, mental health toolkits, STEM activities) may be shared broadly with the following disclaimer:

Disclaimer: This [event/resource/activity] is not a 4-H [event/resource/activity]. We are sharing this information as a convenience, not as an endorsement by North Dakota 4-H.

21. 4-H Grant Application and Approval Policy 🛆

To ensure alignment with the 4-H mission and maintain transparency, collaboration, and youth development integrity, the following policy must be followed for any grant applications submitted under the name or affiliation of a county 4-H program or 4-H club or in support of a 4-H activity.

21.11. Eligibility to Apply

All grant applications must be initiated in support of a group effort and not for the sole benefit of one family or individual.

The project must align with the 4-H mission to provide meaningful, youth-led learning experiences that build life skills such as decision-making, leadership, goal-setting and civic engagement.

21.2 2. Residency and Dual **Enrollment**

Youth/certified 4-H volunteer must apply for grants within the county where they are officially enrolled in 4-H. If a youth or volunteer is dually enrolled (e.g., residing in one county but participating in another), all involved county 4-H professionals must be informed, and a joint agreement must be reached prior to grant development.

The county 4-H office where the club or project work is being conducted will take the lead in managing the grant process.

21.3 3. Required Preapproval **Process**

Before any grant application is submitted the proposed project must go through the following process:

- Presented to and approved by the 4-H club or 4-H council, with a vote recorded in the official meeting minutes.
- Reviewed by the Extension county agent and any applicable 4-H staff.

 Communicated to all 4-H leaders in the club and/or county to ensure transparency.

The grant proposal must include the following:

- A clearly defined and manageable group goal related to the grant's purpose.
- At least two measurable youth learning objectives (e.g., "Participants will demonstrate the ability to develop a budget," or "Youth will practice teamwork and communication to plan a community event." "Youth will reflect and present on experience with skills learned.").
- A plan for reflection and evaluation of the project, ideally involving youth in the assessment of outcomes.

21.4 4. Deliverables and Accountability

Grant applications must outline how funds will be used:

- To support positive youth development
- To provide inclusive opportunities for 4-H youth participation
- · To reflect a shared group effort, not individual gain

Projects funded by grants must include measurable indicators of success (e.g., number of youth involved, community impact, skills gained).

A brief report or showcase of outcomes must be presented to the 4-H council or club upon project completion.

21.5 5. Extension Agent Involvement

County 4-H professionals and Extension agents must be notified and included in the planning and submission of any grant application.

Agents must assist in reviewing the application for alignment with 4-H values, manageability and accountability.

22. Adult Committees and Decision-making Expectations A



Adult advisory committees are an essential part of a strong and sustainable 4-H program. Whether focused on animal science, a specific species, shooting sports, consumer decision making, or camp programming—committees provide valuable expertise, local insight, and serve as a sounding board for challenges and opportunities within the county program.

Establishing clear roles and expectations for these committees not only empowers volunteers to take ownership of their program area but also supports Extension agents by distributing leadership responsibilities, fostering collaboration, and building stronger community partnerships. Committees can offer critical input on show rules, project learning experiences, educational events, volunteer training needs and more.

When used effectively, committees:

- · Enhance transparency and consistency in decision-making
- Leverage the diverse experiences and strengths of local volunteers
- · Improve communication between families, leaders, and Extension staff
- · Build a leadership pipeline among adult volunteers
- Provide Extension agents with a trusted group for feedback, planning, and program development

To ensure these committees function fairly and in alignment with 4-H program values. the following expectations apply to all adult committees operating within the North Dakota 4-H Program.

Purpose:

To ensure all decisions made by 4-H committees reflect collective input and equitable representation and are in alignment with 4-H program values, this policy outlines the requirements for committee operations, authority and decision-making processes.

22.14-H Adult Committees

All decisions related to 4-H programs must be made by a quorum of the committee and reflect a consensus or majority vote. No individual, including the committee president or chairperson, has the authority to make unilateral decisions or take independent action on behalf of the committee without documented consultation with committee members.

22.2 Procedures and Expectations

1. Quorum Requirement:

A quorum (defined as more than 50% of voting members) must be present for any official decision-making. Decisions made without quorum are invalid.

2. Documented Discussion:

All decisions must be preceded by an opportunity for committee discussion — either in-person or via documented electronic correspondence — and recorded in meeting minutes.

3. Voting and Documentation:

Major decisions, especially those impacting youth participation, awards, disciplinary action or financial allocations, must be decided by formal vote. Vote outcomes shall be recorded and retained.

4. Chairperson Role:

The chair or president of the committee is responsible for facilitating meetings and ensuring inclusive participation, not for making decisions independently.

5. Youth Inclusion:

When applicable, youth members serving on committees should have an active voice in the decision-making process, aligned with the 4-H model of youth-adult partnerships.

6. Appeals and Grievances:

Individuals impacted by a committee decision must be informed of their right to appeal or seek clarification through the county grievance process.

22.3 Accountability

Violation of this policy — including unilateral decisions made by any one member — may result in a review of the decision, potential reversal of the action and review of the individual's continued role in the committee.

23. Grievances 🛆

The North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program is committed to providing all participants with a positive and fair environment. To uphold these values, a grievance policy has been established to address and resolve any issues or complaints that may arise. This policy aims to ensure consistency, fairness and the promotion of good character, life skills and positive youth development.

When the safety or mental wellness of 4-H members is a concern, adults or other youth can alert event organizers to a situation adversely affecting a 4-H member.

All grievances involving 4-H will be handled through the local county NDSU Extension office and will not involve third parties like county HR in the initial decision unless deemed necessary by the Extension county agent.

23.1 Definitions in Grievance **Policy**

- Grievance: A formal complaint or concern raised by a youth or adult participant.
- Complainant: The youth must submit the grievance if the issue involves the youth; an adult must submit the complaint if the issue is between adults.
- Respondent: The individual or entity against whom the grievance is filed.
- Event Management Team: The group responsible for managing a specific 4-H event.
- State Volunteer Specialist: State Extension staff member responsible for overseeing state-level grievances.
- Grievance Committee: A body established to review and adjudicate grievances.

23.2 Scope of Grievance Policy

This policy applies to all North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program youth participants.

23.3 Confidentiality of Grievances

All grievances will be handled with the utmost confidentiality. The details of the grievance will only be shared with those directly involved in the resolution process.

23.4 Retaliation Protection During Grievance Procedure

The North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program strictly prohibits any form of retaliation against individuals who file a grievance in good faith. Any retaliation must be reported immediately and will be addressed promptly.

23.4.1 Grievance Documentation and **Investigation Protocol**

The following grievance processes are to be followed at the state level and must be considered at the county level:

To ensure consistency, fairness and transparency when a grievance is filed, the grievance committee must conduct a thorough and impartial review. This includes documenting communication timelines, gathering relevant evidence from all parties and offering youth-centered recommendations that prioritize learning over punishment when appropriate.

23.4.1.1 Evidence-based Investigation

All grievance reviews must be guided by the principle of fact-based decision-making. To support this, grievance committees must make a reasonable effort to do the following:

- Clearly document the reason for the grievance.
- Identify if the appropriate grievance application and dollars were collected.
- · Collect statements from all affected or implicated youth and relevant individuals (parents, leaders, staff, volunteers, etc.)
- Review written communications (emails, texts, letters), event timelines and other supporting records

- Evaluate any available documentation such as photos, enrollment history, FairEntry records or platform communications (e.g., social media posts or messages)
- · Seek input from multiple perspectives before reaching a decision

23.4.1.2 Grievance Documentation Checklist



All grievance files must include the following:

- · Actual filing of the grievance with accompanying monies.
- · Clear written statement of concern.
- Names of involved individuals (youth, parent/ guardian, club leader, staff, others)
- Chronological timeline of events and communications
- Relevant evidence (e.g., screenshots, enrollment records, FairEntry data)
- · Summary of committee interviews or outreach
- · Notes from any grievance meetings (virtual or inperson)
- · Summary of support offered to affected parties
- · Final decision and rationale
- Any recommendations for program or policy improvement

23.4.1.3 Communication Expectations

Grievance committee members and staff must ensure legal guardians listed in 4-H Online are included in key communications where applicable.

If communication is restricted for any reason (e.g., legal orders, internal directives), that decision must be documented, and alternative communication routes clarified.

Any family-directed communication must clearly outline steps for resolution or participation alternatives, when available.

23.4.1.4 Youth-centered Response

In all cases, the goal is to maintain youth engagement and promote personal growth. When appropriate, alternative learning-based consequences may be considered:

- · Reflection exercises
- Mentorship follow-up
- · Ribbon demotion or premium adjustments

If a repeated infraction occurs beyond Year 3 of participation, further participation restrictions may be applied at the discretion of the state 4-H specialist or local 4-H Extension agent, and must be in consultation with the district director. If needed, communicate issues with the 4-H program leader.

23.4.2 State Contest Grievance Process

For all state contest grievances, use the following process for filing a grievance:

Filing a grievance: All protests will be submitted in writing and signed by a youth member participant. The grievance must be given to the 4-H Event Management Team within five hours after the conclusion of the show/event. Grievances made before the show/event takes place must be brought to the event management at least two hours before the show/event to provide time to address the concern. See individual event protocols or different state contest rules for any contest specific procedural differences.

The written grievance submitted to the 4-H Event Management Team must include the following:

- Name(s) of person(s) involved
- Nature of concern(s)
- Situation and documentation of proof of violation
- Specific action, rule, or section of policy, etc., in question
- Request for corrective action(s)/solution driven response
- Additional person(s) the committee may contact for further clarification
- Procedures and/or steps carried out by persons involved prior to submission of the grievance to the 4-H Event Management Team

Deposit: All grievances must be accompanied by a deposit of \$50, which shall be returned to the complainant if sustained, and if the grievance is not sustained, then said sum shall be forfeited.

Review and decision: The 4-H Event Management Team will review the written protest within 24 hours or the next business day.

Confirm that an official grievance has been filed with a deposit.

The grievance committee must contact all affected or implicated youth(s), as well as other relevant individuals. and collect written or verbal statements.

The committee will review the written grievance and may call for a face-to-face or virtual meeting with the affected persons, event leadership and/or other key individuals to fully understand the situation and clarify the facts and evidence.

The committee must conduct a thorough, impartial investigation, gathering information from all relevant parties to ensure multiple perspectives are considered before reaching a final decision. This includes reviewing any related documentation, photos, video or witness accounts when applicable.

All committee members are required to maintain confidentiality, impartiality and professionalism throughout the process.

Recommendations will be developed, documented, and communicated both verbally and in writing to the affected individual(s) or group(s), with clear rationale provided for the decision.

If further action or policy clarification is required, the grievance committee will document those needs and elevate them to appropriate leadership.

In cases of protest, the exhibitor/participant may be allowed to compete. Results of the competition will be subject to change based on the outcome of the grievance process. This allows for the smooth operation of the show/ event and facilitates the appropriate processing of the grievance.

The 4-H Event Management Team reserves the right to withhold or change any award. The exhibitor may be excluded from the show if action warrants.

Nonacceptable grievances: Grievances related to judges' integrity, decisions, placings or other evaluations will not be accepted.

23.4.3 Grievance Process Beyond a Contest or Event

For all grievances unrelated to contests and about statelevel 4-H matters, follow the process outlined below:

Filing a grievance: All protests will be submitted in writing and signed by youth and a volunteer/parent/guardian. The grievance must be given to the state volunteer specialist within five days of the event/incident (i.e., a youth or adult files a grievance regarding a national trip issue within five days of the issue or trip, a youth or adult files a grievance regarding state implemented educational program, camp, or clinic, etc.).

The written grievance submitted to the state volunteer specialist must include the following:

- Name(s) of person(s) involved
- Nature of concern(s)
- · Situation and documentation
- Specific action, rule, section of policy, etc., in question

- Request for correction/solution-driven response
- Additional person(s) the committee may contact for further clarification
- Procedures and/or steps carried out by persons involved prior to submission of the grievance to the state volunteer specialist.

Deposit: All protests must be accompanied by a deposit of \$50, which shall be returned to the complainant if sustained, and if the grievance is not sustained, then said sum shall be forfeited.

Forming a grievance committee: The State Volunteer Specialist shall form a grievance committee composed of a minimum of three people and a maximum of seven people. The committee will include at least one person from a different district than the person filing the grievance and at least one person from the county of the person filing the grievance.

The State Volunteer Specialist will serve as the facilitator of the grievance process and will collect relevant information and organize relevant people.

This grievance committee is authorized to contact the affected or implicated youth(s) and collect a statement.

Review and decision: The committee will review the written protest within four days of receipt.

Confirm that an official grievance has been filed with a deposit.

The grievance committee must contact all affected or implicated youth(s), as well as other relevant individuals, and collect written or verbal statements.

The committee will review the written grievance and may call for a face-to-face or virtual meeting with the affected persons, event leadership, and/or other key individuals to fully understand the situation and clarify the facts and evidence.

The committee must conduct a thorough, impartial investigation, gathering information from all relevant parties to ensure multiple perspectives are considered before reaching a final decision. This includes reviewing any related documentation, photos, video or witness accounts when applicable.

Examples may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Screenshots of text messages, social media posts and/or membership approval
- Reports from 4-H online, FairEntry or other club resources that may serve as evidence

All committee members are required to maintain confidentiality, impartiality and professionalism throughout the process.

Recommendations will be developed, documented, and communicated both verbally and in writing to the affected individual(s) or group(s), with clear rationale provided for the decision.

If further action or policy clarification is required, the grievance committee will document those needs and elevate them to appropriate leadership.

Youth-Centered Consideration

Every effort must be made to allow youth to remain engaged in 4-H activities, even when an infraction has occurred. Consequences must focus on the exhibit, entry or behavior — not on excluding the youth from participation entirely. The intent is to promote accountability and learning, not punishment.

When appropriate, consider alternative consequences:

- · Withholding or reducing premium dollars
- Demotion of ribbon placing (e.g., from blue to red)
- Removal of the exhibit from display after being judged
- Educational conversations or written reflections
- · Required coaching or mentoring follow-up

Mistakes — especially in early years — can be valuable learning opportunities. If the youth is in Year 1 or Year 2 of participation, grace and education must be prioritized. However, if the youth is in Year 4 or beyond and the issue is a repeated infraction, the local 4-H agent has the authority to determine if participation must be restricted or denied.

Nonacceptable grievances: Grievances related to deadlines will not be accepted. Participants can often still participate in the event but may receive penalties due to late registration.

For more information about deadlines, see Deadlines for Competitive Events.

23.4.4 Documentation and Record-keeping

All grievances and related documentation will be maintained by the county NDSU Extension office or the state volunteer specialist for five years. These records will be kept confidential and used solely to resolve grievances and improve the program.

23.4.5 Appeals Process

If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision of the grievance committee, they may appeal the decision in writing to the NDSU Extension assistant director for the 4-H Youth Development Program within 10 days of receiving the decision. The appeal must outline the reasons for the appeal and any additional information to be considered. The appeal must be accompanied by \$100, which will be returned if the appeal is sustained. The decision of the assistant director will be final.

23.5 County Grievance Policy



Counties must establish their own grievance procedure. The following are recommended procedures for the development of a county grievance policy. It is recommended that counties remain consistent with the process defined at the state level. A grievance may typically be filed around a competitive event, but other issues may arise in which this policy could be used.

23.5.1 Establishing a Grievance Committee



Counties must set up a grievance committee to influence the adjudication of grievances submitted by a youth participant and incidents with 4-H volunteers (see Discipline, Dismissal or Suspension of Volunteers and Volunteer Conflict Resolution Appendix). This committee will provide the local NDSU Extension agent with a recommendation for recourse regarding incidents with 4-H program participants.

The Extension county agent has the authority to appoint and remove members from the county grievance committee.

The grievance committee must be an odd-numbered group with a minimum of three and a maximum of seven members. The committee must strive to represent the county's diversity and include members from different backgrounds. Potential members include, but are not limited to the following:

- A member of the fair board (during 4-H Achievement Days/county fair only)
- A member of the county 4-H council
- A 4-H volunteer
- A parent/guardian of a 4-H youth
- · The Extension county agent
- An active 4-H member

In the event that the grievance committee is investigating and making a recommendation regarding a member of the grievance committee, the member in question must recuse themselves from the discussion.

23.5.2 County Adoption

Counties are advised to adopt this policy, which includes definitions, scope, confidentiality, protection from retaliation and process. Recommended language consists of the following:

Definitions

- Grievance: A formal complaint or concern raised by a 4-H member participant.
- Complainant: The youth or other individual submitting the grievance.
- Respondent: The individual or entity against whom the grievance is filed.
- Grievance Committee: A body established to review and adjudicate grievances.

Scope: This policy applies to all youth, volunteers, parents and guardians involved in the North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program at the county level.

Confidentiality: All grievances will be handled with the utmost confidentiality. The details of the grievance will only be shared with those directly involved in the resolution process.

Protection from Retaliation During Grievance

Procedure: The North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program strictly prohibits any form of retaliation against individuals who file a grievance in good faith. Any retaliation must be reported immediately and will be addressed promptly.

Grievance Process

Filing a Grievance: All protests must be submitted in writing and signed by a youth member participant.

The written grievance must include the following:

- Name(s) of person(s) involved
- Cause of complaint or appeal
- Situation and documentation
- Specific action, rule, etc., in question
- · Recommendations for corrective action
- Additional person(s) the committee may contact for further clarification
- Procedures and/or steps carried out by the person involved prior to submission of the protest to the grievance committee.

The grievance will be acknowledged upon receipt and responded to in a timely manner.

The relevant district director must be notified of the grievance.

Review Process: consider adding a timeline here (response within 48-72 hours, week, etc.)

Confirm that an official grievance has been filed with a deposit.

The grievance committee must contact all affected or implicated youth(s), as well as other relevant individuals, and collect written or verbal statements.

The committee will review the written grievance and may call for a face-to-face or virtual meeting with the affected persons, event leadership and/or other key individuals to fully understand the situation and clarify the facts.

The committee must conduct a thorough, impartial investigation, gathering information from all relevant parties to ensure multiple perspectives are considered before reaching a final decision. This includes reviewing any related documentation, photos, video or witness accounts when applicable.

All committee members are required to maintain confidentiality, impartiality and professionalism throughout the process.

Recommendations will be developed, documented and communicated both verbally and in writing to the affected individual(s) or group(s), with clear rationale provided for the decision.

If further action or policy clarification is required, the grievance committee will document those needs and elevate them to appropriate leadership.

Deposit (optional):

A \$50 deposit will accompany the written grievance, which will be forfeited if the youth participant does not attend the grievance resolution meeting. The deposit will be returned upon completion of the process.

Decision and Communication

- In cases of protest, the 4-H member may continue to participate. Results of participation will be subject to change based on the outcome of the grievance process.
- The grievance committee and event leadership reserves the right to withhold or change any award. The 4-H member may be excluded from 4-H if action warrants.

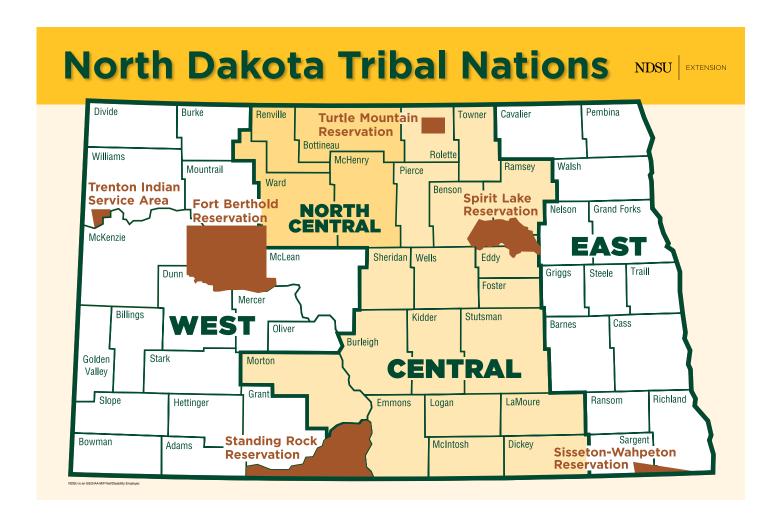
Nonacceptable Grievances

Grievances related to deadlines, judges' integrity, decisions, placings or other evaluations will not be accepted.

24. Appendix

Appendix Table of Contents

Map of Districts (with Tribal Nations)	112
North Dakota 4-H Policy and Handbook Proposal Form	113
Code of Conduct	114
Memorandum of Understanding	118
Agreements and Forms for Enrollment and Event Participation	137
Confidentiality Statement	
Open Enrollment Form (Example)	141
North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program Compliance and Best Practices Checklist	142
Volunteer Screening	146
Adult Chaperone Expectations for 4-H and Other Youth Events	148
Appropriate Delegation to Volunteers	150
Volunteer Conflict Resolution Appendix	152
4-H Volunteer Improvement Plan Example Letter	159
4-H Volunteer Resolution Plan Example Letter	160
Parade Participation Agreement Form	161
Five-Year Plan of Implementation Form	162
Record Retention	163
4-H Accommodation Request Form	165
How to File Club Taxes and Financial Records	166
North Dakota 4-H Ambassador Program	187
County Ambassadors	188
Ribbon Descriptions	189
Medication Log	191





ND 4-H Policy and Procedure Handbook

Rule Change Proposal Form Must be received by March 31st to be considered for the following year

	☐ Add new rule
	☐ Delete existing rule Reference rule as it appears in <i>the Official ND 4-H Policy & Procedure Handbook.</i> Rule #: Page #:
	Change existing rule Reference rule as it appears in <i>the Official ND 4-H Policy & Procedure Handbook.</i> Rule #: Page #:
	Proposed Effective Date: September 1, Other:
	Is this proposal changing a rule that was implemented within the last two years? \square Yes \square No
	 Explain why this rule change is needed: (provide attachments if needed) Define the problem and develop as many possible solutions as you can by asking others for input. Choose one possible solution that appears to be the most appropriate and fits the mission and goals of 4-H. Determine if any other rules would be affected if your proposal were to be adopted, and specify the rule numbers/letters. Submit proper wording for a proposed rule change by typing or neatly printing the exact wording being proposed. If you propose changes to existing language, strike through the words you propose to delete. Type in bold and italics the words you proposed rule changes submitted with sufficient documentation and specific explanations detailing reasons for the change will be reviewed by the North Dakota 4-H Policy Committee and included in an open forum through Google Form with an invitation for all enrolled 4-H members and volunteers to submit comments. Rule changes submitted WITHOUT sufficient documentation and specific explanations detailing reasons for the change will NOT be reviewed.
	Contact information of individual submitting/proposing change: • Name: County of 4-H enrollment:
•	 Address: Email address: Daytime phone number:

YDP1002



EXTENSION



North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program **Code of Conduct**

orth Dakota State University Extension is dedicated to the positive development of North Dakota youth and families. A youth protection policy helps 4-H uphold this commitment. These expectations aim to ensure the safety and well-being of all program participants. All 4-H members, leaders, parents/ caregivers, paid staff, volunteers, event/activity participants and other adults/ youth who participate in the 4-H Youth Development program are expected to adhere to these NDSU Extension standards when engaging in Extension programs. These expectations also apply to online 4-H activities, including social media and online presence.

NDSU Extension and the North Dakota 4-H Youth Development program are dedicated to providing opportunities for children and youth to cultivate character, endorsing the CHARACTER COUNTS!® Six Pillars of Character: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring and Citizenship. To ensure that North Dakota youth programs foster positive environments for all individuals to learn and grow, 4-H members, leaders, parents/caregivers, paid staff, volunteers and other adults/youth participating in the 4-H Youth Development program agree to adhere to these expectations of behavior.

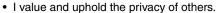


NDSU EXTENSION

EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE >> CHANGING LIVES

Trustworthiness _

- · I commit to upholding trust, honor and confidence in all my interactions.
- I demonstrate integrity by consistently choosing a positive course of action that reflects kindness, even in challenging situations.



- · I prioritize punctuality, informing the relevant individual promptly if I anticipate being late, leaving early or being unable to fulfill a commitment.
- · I work to instill confidence in others through my actions and words
- · I am dependable, following through on my promises and commitments.
- I respect the property of others, refraining from theft or
- · I uphold honesty and integrity in all my endeavors, avoiding lies, cheating, deception, misrepresentation or omission.

Respect _

- I will conduct myself in a courteous and respectful manner, exhibiting good sportsmanship.
- I will promote and model a positive attitude.
- · I will respect the individual rights of all participants and appreciate diversity in skill, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic background and ability.
- I will reject discrimination or prejudice in any
- I will respect personal space and participant choices.
- · I will refrain from inappropriate displays of affection or physical contact.
- · I will treat program and lodging areas, personal property and transportation vehicles with respect.
- · I will follow all published dress code guidelines.
- I will use appropriate language that is constructive and not destructive, refraining from profanity, name calling, insults and put-downs likely to offend or hurt; no bullying of any kind; or setting a bad example.
- · I will not physically harm anyone.
- · I will adhere to and enforce policies and guidelines established for county and state youth programs.
- · I will respect the authority of parents/caregivers, leaders and NDSU Extension professionals and freely accept support and/or supervision from Extension volunteers and paid staff.
- I will respect the educational mission of NDSU Extension.
- I will not disclose confidential information maintained by NDSU Extension to any unauthorized person.
- · I manage my screen time and phone usage responsibly, ensuring it aligns with the goals of the program or is utilized during free time.



RUSTWORTHIN

- · I will be responsible, self-disciplined and dedicated to achieving positivity and kindness in all my endeavors.
- · I will live up to high expectations.
- · I will be accountable for my choices and actions.
- · I will accept personal responsibility for my behavior resulting in damage, theft or misconduct.
- · I will create a safe environment and promptly report any threats to safety or the well-being of participants.
- I will report known or suspected abuse per the NDSU Extension Youth Protection Policy.
- I will communicate with parents/adults if medical or other concerns arise.
- · I will handle animals in a safe and responsible manner.
- · I will operate machinery, vehicles and other equipment in a safe and responsible manner.
- · I will adhere to the program curfew, hours, room and other rules established for the event.
- I will manage time and resources wisely.
- As event chaperones/coaches/leaders, I am responsible for having the required documents for all youth and adult participants for the specific event including but not limited to a signed health form.
- · As an adult, I will follow all risk management policies and procedures including but not limited to sharing of lodging space, room assignments, ruleof-three ratio, personal privacy while showering or changing clothes, and inspecting luggage or rooms when areasonable suspicion exists.

Fairness _

- I will be just, fair and open.
- I will follow rules and share knowledge.
- · I will avoid taking advantage of others and asking for special exceptions.
- · I will participate as a team member and work to be free of bias.
- · I will make decisions based on facts and strive for win-win situations.
- · I will negotiate and exercise give and take to achieve youth or group success.



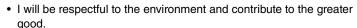
North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program Code of Conduct | 2

Caring -

- · I will treat others the way I want to be treated.
- I will regard others with kindness, compassion and appreciation for their efforts.
- · I will strive to create a good experience by encouraging and supporting full involvement of participants.
- · I will help participants evaluate what they see, hear and do.
- I will communicate face-to-face about issues
- · I understand that bullying behavior in all forms (physical, social, emotional, sexual or electronic) is prohibited. Bullying behavior may include but is not limited to negative actions such as verbal aggression, emotional attacks, sexual harassment, racial discrimination, physical aggression, isolating others or electronic harm.

Citizenship _

- · I will not spread misinformation to anyone participating in the 4-H program (inaccurate and inflammatory social media posts, gossip, etc.).
- · I will apply all reasonable efforts to assure equal access to participation for all youth and adults in accordance with NDSU's equal opportunity and nondiscrimination policy.
- · I will be a law-abiding citizen, complying with all applicable laws of the city, county and location of the 4-H activity/event.



- · I will inform others that alcohol, nicotine and illegal drugs are not allowed at Extension youth programs.
- · I will abstain from illegal behaviors, possession, selling or use of alcohol, marijuana, illegal or illicit drugs (or be under the influence) and nicotine in any form including chewing tobacco, e-cigarettes and vaping products during 4-H events and activities. This includes being present where individuals are using alcohol, nicotine products and/or illegal substances.
- · I will not have in my possession unauthorized weapons, firearms or dangerous materials at 4-H activities or events (except while participating in a 4-H Shooting Sports event and following proper protocol).
- I will uphold and support the responsible and lawful use of social media, refraining from including but not limited to creating or posting content that is abusive, threatening, defamatory, obscene or harassing, or that creates a hostile environment.
- I will address all grievances and concerns related to the local/area 4-H Youth Development program management internally in the NDSU Extension staff, as authority lies with NDSU Extension, not local human resources.
- I will refrain from slandering 4-H in any media or communications, recognizing that the 4-H mission helps us grow, develop new skills, seek understanding and learn from our mistakes.
- I understand that my behavior outside of 4-H activities may affect my good standing as a member or volunteer.







s a 4-H member, leader, parent/caregiver, paid staff or volunteer participating in the NDSU Extension 4-H Youth Development program or event/activity, I will behave in a way that reflects positively on me as an individual as well as the North Dakota 4-H Youth Development program. I understand the meaning of the NDSU Extension 4-H Code of Conduct and will abide by this document. If I do not abide by the items in this Code of Conduct, I may experience the following consequences:

- 1. Lose privileges at the event.
- 2. Be dismissed immediately from the meeting, activity, event or other program (for example: remainder of the fair, camp, judging trip). Notification to guardians will occur, and individuals will be sent home at their own expense prior to the conclusion of the activity.
- 3. The possible forfeiture of future participation in statewide and out-of-state events as well as possible forfeiture of future awards and premiums at the county level.
- 4. Possible dismissal or suspension from the NDSU Extension 4-H Youth Development program.

Consequences, dismissal, suspension or expulsion will be determined by the input, collected evidence and discussion of a grievance committee and NDSU Extension agent and administration. The final decision lies with the NDSU Extension agent for the safety and welfare of all participants involved.

All participants involved in the NDSU Extension 4-H Youth Development program are encouraged to thoroughly review and comprehend the current program policy and handbook.

Screening is required for all 4-H volunteers.

Acceptance and continuation as an NDSU Extension screened adult volunteer or employee, including county-paid personnel at local Extension offices, is contingent upon:

- PB408 Application to Volunteer in Youth Programs
- · Reference checks
- Signed NDSU Extension 4-H Youth Development Program Code of Conduct
- Clearance through the North Dakota Child Abuse Information Index by submission of Form SFN433, facilitating the Department of Human Services screening process
- Clearance through the Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender Public Website.

have read or have had the North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program Code of Conduct document lacktriangleread to me and agree to abide by expectations. I am aware that my actions and decisions affect me as well as others. I am aware that violations may result in consequences.

Parents/caregivers attending or participating in 4-H Youth Development programs also are expected to conduct themselves according to the North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program Code of Conduct, and assist and support youth in their efforts to adhere to this code.

Participant Signature (under 18)	Date	
Parent/Caregiver/Volunteer/Participant Signature	Date	

County commissions, North Dakota State University and U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating, NDSU does not discriminate in its programs and activities on the basis of age, color, gender expression/identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, participation in lawful off-campus activity, physical or mental disability, pregnancy, public assistance status, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, spousal relationship to current employee, or veteran status, as applicable. Direct inquiries to Vice Provost, Title IX/ADA Coordinator, Old Main 100, 701-231-7708, ndsu.eoaa@ndsu.edu. This publication will be made available in alternative formats for people with disabilities upon request, 701-231-7881.

North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program Code of Conduct | 4



Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

between North Dakota State University (NDSU) Extension and 4-H Councils and 4-H Clubs in Good Standing



NDSU EXTENSION

EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE >> CHANGING LIVES

Overview

Purpose and Importance

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishes the framework and expectations for the partnership between North Dakota State University (NDSU) Extension and the 4-H councils and clubs. It ensures compliance with federal, state and university policies; promotes effective youth development programs; ensures a safe environment for all 4-H participants; and maintains the integrity and quality of local and state 4-H programs.

Key Areas of Discussion

4-H Emblem Use

- Importance: Recognizes 4-H as a national organization and sets guidelines for the use of the 4-H name and emblem. https://drive.google.com/file/d/13U4iwH6Gsoll3q5FETLU64rD6Jg-UoKE/ view?usp=drive_link
- Compliance: Requires adherence to laws and regulations established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA).

Organizational Structure

- Levels of Leadership: Describes leadership at national, state and county levels, including the roles of Extension agents, councils, advisory committees and volunteers.
- Authority: Clarifies the authority of NDSU Extension in administering 4-H programs and use of the 4-H name and emblem.

Roles and Responsibilities

- NDSU Extension Agents: Primary authority in 4-H programs who are responsible for educational programming, compliance, data management and volunteer oversight.
- County 4-H Contacts and Support Staff: Facilitate communication and support, ensuring program alignment with federal, state and university policies.
- 4-H Program Assistants (PAs): Support operational aspects but do not engage in direct teaching.

4-H Council and Club Functions

- 4-H Council: Advises on county 4-H policies and assists with program planning, promoting and evaluating.
- 4-H Club: Provides youth development through organized activities and must be officially chartered.

Operational Requirements

- Good Standing: Councils and clubs must comply with NDSU Extension guidelines, financial practices and reporting requirements.
- Program and Activity Guidelines: Ensure activities align with educational purposes and promote youth development.

Financial Management

- Use of Funds: Funds raised must support 4-H activities and comply with federal regulations and the 4-H Name and Emblem Use Handbook.
- Financial Oversight: 4-H council/4-H club financial oversight includes requirements for recordkeeping, financial reporting, and plans for spending excess funds, each submitted to the local NDSU Extension agent to ensure federal compliance and 4-H program integrity.

Recordkeeping and Reporting

• Compliance: 4-H council/4-H club maintains records and submits reports as required by NDSU Extension to ensure transparency and accountability at the local, states and federal levels.

Due July 15th

- ☐ Signed every 3 years by president of the 4-H council and the 4-H club leader Signed by newly chartered
- Cover with new volunteers

Value of the **MOU** Document

- Guidance: Provides clear guidelines and expectations for the operation and management of 4-H councils and clubs.
- Compliance: Ensures adherence to legal and regulatory standards, safeguarding the integrity of the 4-H Youth Development program.
- · Support: Offers a structured framework to support the effective administration and delivery of youth development programs.
- Transparency: Promotes accountability and transparency in financial and programmatic activities.

By understanding and following the MOU, 4-H councils and clubs can effectively contribute to the mission of the North Dakota 4-H Youth Development program, fostering positive youth development and community engagement. This document is a crucial tool for maintaining consistency, quality and legal compliance across all 4-H programs in North Dakota.

ND 4-H Google Drive > 4-H Clubs Folder > Club Management Folder: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/ 1clf3yRn9pXyo9px7xBZqkPnhbB7WYZqs

 $\stackrel{ ext{ iny 2}}{ ext{ iny 2}}$ 4-H Councils and 4-H Clubs in Good Standing Memorandum of Understanding

4-H Emblem Use

4-H Emblem

The 4-H emblem is a federally recognized symbol authorized for use by 4-H entities under federal regulation title 18 U.S.C. 707. In partnership with NDSU Extension, North Dakota's 1862 land-grant university (LGU), the emblem can be used for educational purposes within 4-H Youth Development programs. This authorization is governed by the laws and regulations established by the U.S. Congress, the Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture's (NIFA) Division of Youth and 4-H.

Organizational Structure

Leadership Levels

- National, State and County Levels: Leadership is provided by NDSU Extension agents in cooperation with parents, guardians and officially screened 4-H volunteer leaders.
- Advisory Roles: Fulfilled by 4-H councils, 4-H advisory committees and other 4-H entities that offer feedback and advice on program direction, initiatives and goals in their communities.

Authority

• NDSU Extension: Holds the authority to establish and administer the 4-H Youth Development program as a result of being housed in North Dakota's LGU.

4-H Youth Development Programs

- · Conducted under the authority of NDSU Extension and USDA NIFA.
- · Local and county programs and volunteers are accountable to NDSU Extension professionals responsible for 4-H Youth Development.
- The use of the 4-H name and emblem is protected by law and controlled by NDSU Extension, as directed by USDA NIFA.
- 4-H councils, groups, clubs and volunteers operate under the guidance and control of the Cooperative Extension System in partnership with NIFA, granting authority through NDSU.

Leadership of the North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program

Key Roles:

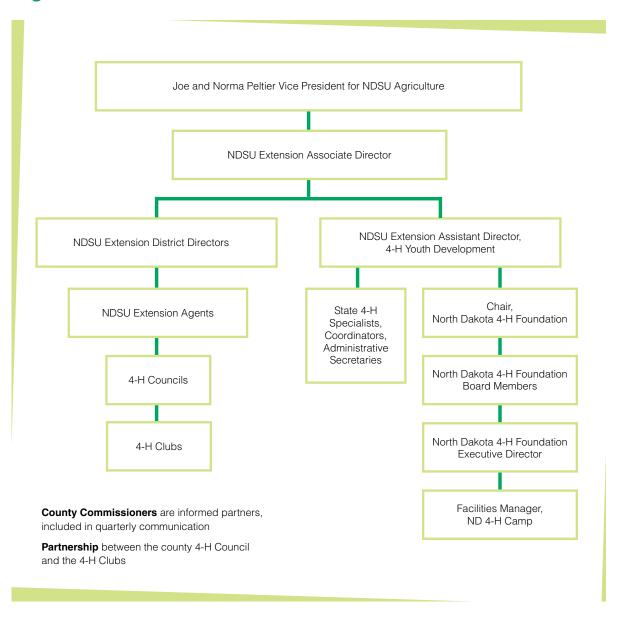
- NDSU Extension Director, Associate Director and Assistant Director for 4-H Youth Development
 - Align priorities and direction of the 4-H program with National 4-H, federal and state priorities.
 - Aim to enhance the lives and livelihoods of North Dakotans through research-based education.
- State 4-H Office
 - Administers needs assessments to discover relevant social issues and concerns.
 - Aligns programs with available research and staff through NDSU Extension.

Summary

NDSU Extension, in collaboration with federal entities, provides structured leadership and authority for 4-H youth development programs at multiple levels. 4-H Name and Emblem Use Handook is strictly regulated, ensuring it represents the educational and developmental goals of 4-H youth programs. Leadership from the state 4-H office and at the county level ensures that programs are relevant, research based, and aligned with broad priorities to benefit North Dakota youth and communities.

Roles and Reponsibilities

North Dakota State University Extension **Organizational Chart**



NDSU Extension 4-H Youth Development Leadership Roles

NDSU District Director

The District Director (DD) supervises the Extension agents in the counties and tribal Extension offices in their assigned district.

The districts are: (https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WN7rYP_P5IHMdr9Rak3Drr3nDECgVWC2/view)

- North Central
- Central
- East

Roles and Responsibilities

Communication

- Facilitates communication of 4-H program needs within their district.

• Program Stewardship

- Ensures that NDSU Extension agents are effectively managing their 4-H programs.

Situational Mitigation

- Works with the 4-H contact and other Extension agents to address and resolve conflicts and behavior issues within the 4-H program.

Support for Extension staff and offices

- Provides coaching and advice for local Extension staff.
- Works with the county commission to help ensure that the Extension office has adequate resources.

■ NDSU Extension Agent

The NDSU Extension agent holds the primary authority over the 4-H program in the county. These agents include:

- Agriculture and Natural Resource Agents (ANR)
- Family and Consumer Wellness Agents (FCW)
- 4-H Youth Development Agents (4-H YD)

Roles and Responsibilities

· Leadership and Program Management

- Acts as the local NDSU Extension presence and serves as the primary authority over the 4-H program at the local level.
- Leads the county or tribal 4-H program (in offices with more than one Extension agent, the agents serve in co-leadership
- Conducts the 4-H program in alignment with the national and state 4-H Youth Development Program's mission and vision.

Educational Programming

- Offers 4-H educational programming and training to volunteers and youth based on identified needs.
- Provides positive youth development experiences through various platforms, including clubs, after-school programs, in-school programs, camping, webinars and special-interest programs.

· Participant and Volunteer Management

- Ensures all 4-H participants are enrolled in 4-H Online for insurance coverage.
- Maintains secure and confidential data of all 4-H participants.
- Ensures all adult and teen 4-H volunteers (18+) undergo required volunteer screening procedures and are enrolled in 4-H Online.

Policy and Administration

- Handles issues related to 4-H policy and administration, including disciplinary actions.
- Observes 4-H programming to ensure compliance with 4-H and NDSU policies, as well as federal regulations, ensuring a safe and caring environment.

Financial and Activity Records

- Maintains financial records and supports tax guidance for the 4-H council and 4-H clubs.
- Keeps records of 4-H club activities and reports club financial records to the state 4-H office.

· Alignment with Mission and Vision

- Conducts the 4-H program in alignment with the national and state 4-H Youth Development program's mission and vision.

Advisory Role

- Advises 4-H councils and clubs to maintain records of service-learning activities, camps, after-school programs and other experiential learning opportunities.

It is not mandatory for an Extension agent to attend every 4-H council meeting, activity or club gathering. Empowering certified 4-H volunteers to take leadership roles fosters their professional development, personal skill development, community involvement and learning opportunities.

County 4-H Contact

The County 4-H Contact is the NDSU Extension agent who is considered the primary initial contact for the county, but is not solely responsible for the 4-H program. The responsibility is shared among all Extension agents in the county. 4-H will be listed behind their name in the directory if they are serving in this role.

Roles and Responsibilities

Primary Contact

- Serves as the lead contact for initial connections and clarifies messages from state, district and local levels.
- Signs documents and facilitates communication regarding 4-H communication of events, announcements, activities, etc. within the county.
- This role may rotate from year to year in the county, allowing each Extension agent the opportunity to serve as the county 4-H contact.

Shared Responsibility

- All Extension agents in the county share the responsibility for the 4-H program.
- Collaborates with county peers to lead the 4-H youth development program in compliance with federal and state laws, and NDSU Extension policies.

Leadership and Implementation

- Provides leadership for planning, implementing and evaluating the 4-H youth development program in the county.
- Manages the flow of information from federal/national and state entities responsible for the 4-H program.

Final Decision

- Serves as the primary decision-maker, whether related to weather, safety or program logistics (while collaboration, consultation with stakeholders and use of a grievance committee are encouraged).

Every NDSU Extension agent has a 4-H youth component built into their position description, ensuring collective responsibility for the program.

County Coordinator

The County Coordinator (CC) will be identified in the directory by a "CC" next to their name. The CC is responsible for overseeing the county budget, including its management and presentation to county commissioners. Additionally, the CC acts as the liaison between the district director, county government, and NDSU. They are also responsible for maintaining civil rights documents and ensuring compliance with reporting requirements. Specific training for this role is typically provided by district directors. The CC also supervises the support staff within their local office. This role works in partnership with the county 4-H contact to ensure the 4-H program is thriving.

4-H Program Assistant (PA)

The 4-H Program Assistant (PA) is a county employee who works closely with Extension agents to support the 4-H Youth Development program. If a county does not have this position, the following responsibilities must be delegated among the NDSU Extension staff.

Roles and Responsibilities May Include:

Volunteer Management

- Recruit and manage 4-H adult and teen volunteers.

Outreach and Communication

- Facilitates and coordinates outreach events and activities related to 4-H, including through social media.
- Manage 4-H newsletters and other communication tools.

Event Coordination

- Recruit judges and coaches for 4-H events.
- Coordinate activities related to the 4-H County Fair or Achievement Days.

Logistical Support

- Provide operational support for various aspects of the county 4-H program.

Scope of Responsibilities

• Unlike Extension agents, the 4-H PA does not participate in the educational or teaching components of the program.

County Support Staff

County Support Staff are integral members of all Extension offices, typically serving as the initial point of contact for the public.

Roles and Responsibilities May Include:

• Public Interaction

- Serve as the first point of contact for the public, answering inquiries and providing information.

Office Operations

- Aid Extension agents and 4-H program assistants with administrative and logistical tasks.

• Material Distribution

- Distribute 4-H project sheets, recruitment materials, project guides and the North Dakota State Fair 4-H Exhibit List to the public.

Scope of Responsibilities

- Not authorized to deliver direct educational programs for 4-H.
- Not authorized to complete 4-H tax documents.

Key Points

- In some counties, this position is a shared role between the county responsibilities and NDSU Extension. In other counties, this role may only serve the NDSU Extension agent(s).
- · Plays a vital role in supporting the delivery of high-quality educational programs by managing the office and facilitating access to materials.

4-H Council and Club Functions

4-H Council

The 4-H Council is a collaborative body of 4-H volunteers that works closely with the county Extension office to ensure the effective implementation and operation of 4-H programs. Its primary role is advisory and administrative, focusing on the broader strategy and direction of 4-H activities in the county.

Key Characteristics

- · Purpose: Works with county Extension staff to plan, promote, develop, implement, execute and evaluate a quality 4-H youth development program that meets the needs and interests of the county's youth.
- Partnership with Extension Office: The 4-H council partners with the county Extension office to assess the needs and interests of the county's youth, ensuring that educational programs are relevant, 4-H mission driven and beneficial to the
- Membership: Includes all 4-H leaders and members in the county and may also include parents, guardians, school personnel, youth workers, stakeholders and other community members interested in youth development.
- Advisory Role: Advises the county Extension agent on establishing county 4-H policies and procedures. However, the Extension agent retains the final authority and responsibility for the county's 4-H program.
- · Voice of Volunteers: Acts as the voice of 4-H volunteers in the county, contributing to program direction, identifying and setting goals, and helping with decision-making processes.

4-H Club

A 4-H club is a grassroots organization that directly engages youth in personal development and service-learning through structured activities and leadership opportunities. It operates as the primary delivery method for hands-on education and experiential learning of the 4-H Youth Development program.

Key Characteristics

- · Youth Empowerment: Focuses on empowering youth through personal development activities, career exploration and community outreach initiatives.
- Membership Requirements: Must consist of at least five youths from three different families, with members between ages 5 (Cloverbud) and 18 years.
- Organizational Structure: Organized with elected officers such as president, vice president, secretary and treasurer to foster leadership skills among youth members.
- Official Charter: Must be officially chartered and operate in partnership with the county 4-H council and the NDSU Extension agent to ensure alignment with broader 4-H goals, and federal, state and local policy and standards.
- · Hands-On Activities: Engages youth in hands-on learning experiences, projects and activities that promote skill development, teamwork and service-learning.

Summary

- 4-H Council: Focuses on the strategic planning, development and administrative aspects of the 4-H program at the county level. It collaborates with the county Extension office to assess and respond to the needs of youth, involving a broader range of stakeholders, and acts as the advisory and decision-making body for county policies and programs.
- 4-H Club: Directly engages youth in developmental activities with elected officers and structured programs. It serves as the primary method for delivering 4-H skill-developing experiences to youth that focus on personal growth, leadership and community service in a localized setting.

Both entities play crucial roles in the success of the 4-H program, with the council providing governance and strategic direction, and the club focusing on direct engagement and development of youth members.

4-H Volunteer Club Leader

The 4-H Volunteer Club Leader is a pivotal figure in the 4-H program, dedicated to guiding and supporting youth through a range of developmental activities and projects. Their role is comprehensive and involves multiple responsibilities to ensure the holistic growth and well-being of the club members.

Key Responsibilities

- Building Relationships: Developing and maintaining caring and supportive relationships with all club members to foster a sense of belonging, inclusivity, safety and trust.
- Educational Guidance: Providing opportunities for meaningful learning experiences through hands-on projects and educational activities.
- Life Skills Development: Creating programs and activities that help youth develop essential life skills such as leadership, communication and problem-solving.
- Service Opportunities: Encouraging and organizing opportunities for members to engage in community service, emphasizing the importance of giving back.
- Youth Leadership: Allowing and encouraging youth to take on leadership roles in the club, promoting decision-making and autonomy.
- Inclusive Environment: Ensuring the club is welcoming and inclusive to all members, respecting diversity and fostering a supportive atmosphere.
- Family Support: Guiding and supporting 4-H families with event planning, activity participation and overall engagement in the 4-H program.
- Nurturing Passion: Helping youth identify and nurture their interests and passions in the context of 4-H projects and activities.

4-H Volunteer (Chaperone, Activity Helper, Guest Speaker, etc.)

4-H Volunteers serving in various roles such as chaperone, activity helper, guest speaker, judge, committee member or event facilitator provide crucial support to the 4-H program. A 4-H volunteer may serve in a variety of capacities based on their interests, skills and time. Opportunities range from short-term to long-term commitments.

Key Responsibilities

Chaperone

- Supervision: Ensuring the safety and well-being of 4-H members during events, trips and activities.
- Behavior Management: Monitoring and managing member behavior, and maintaining a positive and respectful
 environment.
- Support Role: Assisting the club leader and other volunteers with logistical needs during events.

• Program or Activity Helper

- Facilitation: Assisting in the execution of specific activities or projects as directed by the club leader.
- **Guidance:** Providing hands-on support and guidance to youth during activities, ensuring they understand and engage with the tasks.
- Logistics: Helping set up and clean-up activities, manage supplies and ensure a smooth operation.

Guest Speaker

- Expertise Sharing: Bringing specialized knowledge or skills to the club, offering workshops, presentations or demonstrations.
- Inspiration: Inspiring and motivating youth by sharing experiences, stories and expertise in a particular field.
- Short-term Engagement: Typically involved in a single event or a short series of events rather than ongoing club

Judge at County Fair or Achievement Days

- Evaluation: Assessing and judging entries in various categories, providing constructive feedback to participants.
- Fairness and Objectivity: Ensuring a fair and unbiased judging process, upholding the integrity of the competition.

Skill Instructor and/or Coach

- Teaching: Providing instruction in specific skills or areas of expertise, helping youth develop new competencies.
- Hands-on Learning: Engaging youth in practical, hands-on learning experiences to reinforce skill acquisition.
- Contests/events: Bringing youth to test their knowledge, refine their skills and engage in experiential learning opportunities at events, camps or contests.

- Committee Member or Key Role in Event Management
 - Leadership: Serving in key roles on planning committees for events such as fairs or achievement days.
 - Event Coordination: Helping manage and drive forward local fairs or achievement days, ensuring successful planning
 - Facilitation: Assisting in the facilitation and management of events, ensuring smooth operation and positive experiences for all participants.

Summary

- 4-H Volunteer Club Leader: A long-term, multifaceted role focused on the overall development of club members, providing continuous support, guidance and opportunities for personal and communal growth. Clubs can share this leadership opportunity, having multiple 4-H volunteer club leaders for each 4-H club. This helps with potential time and scheduling constraints and allows for shared learning and volunteer skill development.
- 4-H Volunteer (Chaperone, Activity Helper, Guest Speaker, Judge, Skill Instructor, Committee Member, Event Facilitator, etc.): More specific and often short-term roles that provide targeted support, supervision, expertise or event management, enhancing the overall 4-H experience but without the extensive responsibilities of a club leader.

Each role is essential to the success of the 4-H program, contributing uniquely to the growth and enrichment of its members.

State 4-H Office

In North Dakota, the 4-H program operates under the authority of NDSU Extension and USDA NIFA. The state 4-H office, located at North Dakota State University (NDSU) in Fargo, holds primary responsibility for the 4-H program. The staff collaborate with other program areas and Extension's leadership to support the state's 4-H initiatives.

National Cooperative Extension System partners working together include:

- U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA NIFA) Federal funding and program partnership
- Extension Committee on Organization and Policy 4-H Leadership Committee (ECOP 4-H) provides governance, policy and
- Program Leaders Working Group (PLWG) serves as the program voice and priorities
- National 4-H Council serves as the fundraising, marketing and convening entity
- National Association of Extension 4-H Youth Development Professionals (NAE4-HYDP) serves as the professional development association

Functions of the State 4-H Office

- Oversees 4-H Program Planning Teams.
- Delivers research-based updates to Extension agents.
- · Conducts research and provides onboarding and training.
- Leads state 4-H contests and oversees 4-H events at the North Dakota State Fair.
- Conducts needs assessments, evaluates programs and addresses critical challenges.
- Supports NDSU Extension agents and 4-H volunteers.

North Dakota 4-H Foundation

The North Dakota 4-H Foundation is a nonprofit partner that supports and strengthens the 4-H Youth Development Program through fundraising, stewardship and advocacy. The Foundation provides resources that expand opportunities for youth, volunteers and staff across the state. It owns and manages the 80-acre North Dakota 4-H Camp in Washburn, North Dakota, which is available year-round for rental for conferences, activities and events. The Foundation is guided by a working volunteer board and employs an executive director, whose record of employment is held by NDSU. This position is supported through a shared salary arrangement between NDSU Extension and the 4-H Foundation. Each year, the Foundation also awards scholarships to youth, helping them pursue higher education and continued leadership development. The Foundation welcomes donations throughout the year, with Giving Hearts Day serving as its largest campaign to support youth programming.

Assistant Director, 4-H Youth Development

The Assistant Director of 4-H Youth Development leads the State 4-H Office, overseeing various administrative and programmatic aspects to ensure the success and growth of 4-H programs in North Dakota.

Roles and Responsibilities

Administrative Oversight

- Serves on the Extension Leadership Team (ELT) to establish goals and address initiatives aligned with national and local priorities.
- Establishes goals and addresses initiatives aligned with national and local priorities.
- Provides oversight to the State 4-H Office staff, ensuring efficient operation and coordination of program activities.

Program Development

- Works toward the development of innovative and impactful 4-H programs that address the needs and interests of youth across the state.

• Policy and Compliance

- Establishes and oversees policies related to 4-H program operations.
- Ensures compliance with insurance and financial regulations.

Budget Management

- Manages and secures financial resources allocated to the 4-H Youth Development program.
- Develops and monitors the program budget to ensure effective utilization of funds.

Conflict Resolution

- Facilitates conflict resolution and mediation as needed to address challenges within the program.

Fundraising and Collaboration

- Serves on the ND 4-H Foundation board to assist in identifying financial resources for 4-H programming.
- Works closely with stakeholders and partners to enhance support for 4-H initiatives.
- The assistant director drives the strategic direction of the 4-H Youth Development program and ensures its alignment with broader organizational goals.
- The assistant director's leadership and oversight contribute to the overall effectiveness and sustainability of 4-H programs in North Dakota.

State 4-H Specialists

State 4-H Specialists, part of the State 4-H Office, leverage technical expertise to create and implement innovative Extension programming for diverse audiences.

Key Responsibilities

- Develop and lead 4-H programs based on statewide needs identified through Program Planning Teams, needs assessments and surveys.
- Provide research-based information to support Extension agents and personnel.
- Engage in grant writing and secure funding for program interests.

Additional Notes

- Specialists may not always be based at the NDSU campus.
- Some specialists hold faculty positions with teaching components and may be on a tenure track.
 - 4-H Councils and 4-H Clubs in Good Standing Memorandum of Understanding

State 4-H Coordinators

State 4-H Coordinators, also part of the State 4-H Office, uses technical expertise to design and implement innovative Extension programming for diverse audiences.

Key Responsibilities

- Develop and lead 4-H programs addressing statewide concerns identified through various inputs.
- Provide research-based information to support Extension agents and personnel.
- Participate in grant writing and secure funding for program interests.

Additional Notes

- Coordinators may not always be based at the NDSU campus.
- Unlike specialists, coordinators are not required to hold a Masters or Ph.D. degree.

State 4-H Administrative Secretaries

The State 4-H Administrative Secretaries oversee essential platforms and support various statewide 4-H program efforts.

Key Responsibilities

- Manage 4-H Online, FairEntry, and UltraCamp platforms.
- · Support specialists and coordinators.
- Assists with volunteer support including the Sterling platform.
- · Assist with 4-H club charters, contests, events and activities.
- Oversee 4-H insurance compliance.
- Facilitate national 4-H leadership events and support 4-H Ambassadors.
- Work with NDSU Human Resources, processing onboarding and time slips.
- Manage educational trunk checkout and update literature and resources.
- · Assist with 4-H activities at the North Dakota State Fair.

Additional Notes

- State 4-H administrative secretaries play a crucial role in facilitating the smooth operation of various statewide 4-H activities and initiatives.
- Their dedication and support are invaluable in maintaining the integrity and success of 4-H programs across the state.

Summary

The State 4-H Office, consisting of the assistant director, 4-H specialists, 4-H coordinators and 4-H administrative support, serves as the central hub for the planning, implementation and coordination of 4-H programs in North Dakota. Together, the staff leverage their expertise and resources to address statewide concerns, provide essential support to Extension agents and 4-H volunteers, and ensure the continued growth and success of the 4-H Youth Development program. Their collaborative efforts alongside Extension agents contribute to creating impactful experiences and opportunities for youth across the state.

Operational Requirements

Operational Requirements

County 4-H councils and 4-H clubs must maintain good standing with NDSU Extension through:

Compliance

- Operate in a manner consistent with the North Dakota 4-H Charter (https://drive.google.com/drive/ folders/13HuCJze7n7XTam8nk1TcxSZpQabucymf?usp=drive_link) and all other requirements for 4-H councils/ clubs, included but not limited to:
 - Follow 4-H Name and Emblem Use Handbook policies.
 - https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1QMi-jOSGxMyc3PQAjaHHhBq_mlxTQW_3?usp=drive_link
 - Ensure all 4-H volunteers working with youth are appropriately screened. https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/11fSnKUXOmb-2obqD1mJvmqUGnahmzoCQ?usp=drive_link
- Adhere to financial guidelines and other policies and practices set by NDSU Extension.
- https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1EBhbnnawjGrR9gaXuwzN1Tynk57Ww4bD?usp=drive_link
 - Maintain proper financial records.
 - Report financial records to NDSU Extension agent, the IRS and the Secretary of State.

Policies and Practices

- Follow all policies and practices required by NDSU Extension.
- Uphold and mentor the 4-H Code of Conduct. https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1QMj-jOSGxMyc3PQAjaHHhBq_mlxTQW_3?usp=drive_link
- Establish a safe and inclusive learning environment.

Consequences of Non-Compliance

· Failure to comply with these requirements, policies and practices may result in the revocation of the county 4-H council or club 4-H charter and/or termination of this agreement.

Programs and Activities

In accordance with NDSU Extension requirements, the 4-H council/club must provide a variety of learning experiences and opportunities aimed at helping youth reach their full potential. The responsibilities include:

Program Delivery

- Conduct programs and activities that further the purposes and objectives of 4-H.
- Provide a range of learning experiences and opportunities for youth development.
- Conduct a needs assessment to identify the needs of the youth in 4-H clubs.

Information Sharing

- Make available to NDSU Extension information regarding 4-H council/club meetings, programs and other activities.
- Make a record of programs and activities held to capture the good work and contributions the local 4-H program is delivering.

Observation

- Allow NDSU Extension representatives to observe programs and activities as necessary to fulfill their obligations.

Key Points

- · The county 4-H council and individual clubs must consistently align with the mission and guidelines of NDSU Extension.
- · Regular communication and transparency with NDSU Extension are essential for the continuous support and oversight of 4-H programs and activities.

Financial Management

Tax-Exempt Status

• The 4-H council/club agrees to operate for educational purposes under the authority of NDSU Extension, promoting 4-H and its mission within the meaning of tax-exempt status per the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) if the 4-H council/ club has obtained nonprofit status.

Use of Funds

- Any funds raised by the 4-H council/club will be used to sustain 4-H activities of the council/club and support 4-H and NDSU Extension efforts in empowering youth through personal development and community outreach.
- All funds raised in the name of 4-H must be used exclusively for 4-H Youth Development educational opportunities and programs (federal regulation title 18 U.S.C. 707).

Financial Restrictions

- The 4-H council/club will not pay any funds, other than reimbursements for council/club expenses, to its members, officers, adult volunteers, parents, etc. working with them.
- . The 4-H council/club will not participate in or intervene in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office nor will a substantial part of its activities involve carrying on propaganda or attempting to influence legislation.
- The 4-H council/club will not engage in any activities not permitted under its tax-exempt status.

Financial Investments and Plans

- The 4-H council/club should invest money raised in the name of 4-H for the youth in their community.
- If the balance of a 4-H council/club account exceeds \$30,000 at the end of the 4-H year (August 31), a five-year plan must be submitted to the county Extension agent to spend down excess funds relating to a specific 4-H Youth Development goal. The plan should have specific steps and deadlines for each of the five fiscal years and must describe the use of funds and the benefits to the youth and the community. An example plan is included at the end of
- Funds raised for structures/buildings or other assets not directly educational or programmatically related to 4-H must have a five-year implementation plan, including the benefits to 4-H youth, families, the location (e.g., fair), and the community. An example plan is included at the end of this document.
- Money raised must be invested in the local 4-H youth development program. This may include but is not limited to educational, technical and camp scholarships; national trip funding; day camps; clinics; activities; events; volunteer training; 4-H club/team travel; contests; and other opportunities to help youth build essential life skills and reach their
- If a 4-H club loses its 4-H charter or is dissolved, all remaining funds will be transferred to the county 4-H council under the authority of NDSU Extension. All property must be turned into the local NDSU Extension office where the charter was held.

Tax guidance is located in the ND 4-H Google Drive in the

4-H Clubs Folder > Club Management Folder > Taxes Folder:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1EBhbnnawjGrR9gaXuwzN1Tynk57Ww4bD?usp=drive_link

Recordkeeping and Reporting

Recordkeeping, Reporting, and Inspection

- The 4-H council/club must maintain all organizational, programmatic and financial records in compliance with NDSU Extension requirements, including the North Dakota 4-H Club Charter Guidelines and the North Dakota 4-H guidelines for handling money.
- · Records must be available for review by NDSU Extension staff, and certain written reports, including an annual financial report, must be submitted to NDSU Extension.
- The 4-H council/club must complete proper reporting with the IRS, Secretary of State and other entities as needed (for example, if a 4-H council/club obtained a grant that requires specific reporting).
- (Insert who is responsible for this) must report all active and inactive 4-H clubs to ensure proper reporting measures at the local, state and national level. See signature sheet at the end of this document.
- Upon request by NDSU Extension staff, the 4-H council/club must provide a copy of the financial records, program activity records, meeting minutes, service-learning reports, annual goals and other records necessary for NDSU Extension to meet its obligations.

Acknowledgment

By signing below, I confirm that I have fully read and understand the contents of this document in its entirety.

4-H Council/Club President Printed name	4-H Council/Club President Signature (4-H Contact)	 Date
NDSU County Extension agent	 NDSU County Extension agent	
Printed name	Signature (4-H Contact)	Bato

This document provides a clear and structured outline of the expectations, responsibilities and operational guidelines for 4-H councils and clubs under the authority of NDSU Extension. It ensures that all parties are aligned with the mission and objectives of the 4-H Youth Development program, promoting effective governance, compliance and youth development.



4-H Councils and 4-H Clubs in Good Standing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Signature Page

Due July 15 of each year to allow time for archiving clubs for all 53 counties by September 1. Signing below indicates that the 4-H council/4-H club representative have fully read and understand the contents of the MOU in its entirety.

Each county will collect one signed MOU from it's 4-H council and each active 4-H Club. When a new 4-H club is chartered, you will collect a signed MOU from the new 4-H leader. On the page, list 4-H council/club names, and submit it to the NDSU Extension agent by July 15. Similarly, if you know a 4-H club in your county has become inactive within a year, please notify the state 4-H office before September 1. The NDSU Extension agent is responsible for submitting this sheet to the state office to ensure all county 4-H clubs are correctly updated (active or inactive) in the 4-H Online system by July 15 each year. This ensures proper annual reporting and accuracy for the upcoming 4-H year. Maintaining a current list helps organizational efforts during annual reporting at the local, state and national level.

Name (county) 4-H Club – List ACTIVE 4-H Club Name 4-H Club Name	Signed By Any 4-H Council Member
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I-H Club Name	
	Signed By 4-H Club Leader
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	Date
	ired County
SU Extension Agent, 4-H Contact	bmit via email to state 4-H Office at ndsu.4-



INACTIVE CLUB LIST

Submit each year that the MOU does not need to be signed for your county. (MOU is signed every three years.) Submitting only inactive 4-H club names shortens the process in the off years, ensuring only the correct 4-H clubs roll over into the new 4-H year. Due July 15 of each year when full MOU isn't submitted.

4-H Club – List INACTIVE 4-		15 111011
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his list certifies that the entire cou	unty is in good standing as of	 Date
	Signature Required	County

 $1\, 7$ $\,$ 4-H Councils and 4-H Clubs in Good Standing Memorandum of Understanding

Submit via email to state 4-H Office at ndsu.4-H@ndsu.edu.



4 -H Excess Funds Five-Year Plan of Implementation

ame of 4-H Council/Club:			
ate:			
mount of Excess Funds that Must be Spent D	Down or Invested in 4-H	:	
ate for Completion of Disbursement of Excess	ss Funds (must be within	n five years of today's date	e):
pecific 4-H Youth Development G	oal from Funds:		
Senefits These Funds/This Projec	ct will Provide fo	r 4-H Youth:	
pecific Steps to Accomplish Goal	S:		Signature to sign off
pecific Steps to Accomplish Goals		Individual responsible	Signature to sign off step was completed
	Date to be	Individual responsible	
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	Date to be	Individual responsible	
	Date to be	Individual responsible	
Specific Step (add steps as needed)	Date to be	Individual responsible	
Specific Step (add steps as needed)	Date to be	Individual responsible Date	
ubmitted by: H Volunteer (signature and printed name)	Date to be		
Specific Step (add steps as needed) ubmitted by:	Date to be		



www.ag.ndsu.edu/4H

NDSU Extension does not endorse commercial products or companies even though reference may be made to tradenames, trademarks or service names.

For more information on this and other topics, see www.ndsu.edu/extension

County commissions, North Dakota State University and U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating, NDSU does not discriminate in its programs and activities on the basis of age, color, gender expression/identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, participation in lawful off-campus activity, physical or mental disability, pregnancy, public assistance status, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, spousal relationship to current employee, or veteran status, as applicable. Direct inquise to Vice Provost, Title IX/ADA Coordinator, Old Main 100, 701-231-7708, ndsu.eoaa@ndsu.edu. This publication will be made available in alternative formats for people with disabilities upon request, 701-231-7881.

Agreements and Forms for Enrollment and Event Participation

As part of the 4-H enrollment process in North Dakota, youth and volunteers are required to review and accept several important agreements within 4-H Online. These agreements have been carefully developed and approved by NDSU's legal counsel and risk management division to ensure clarity, safety, and compliance with institution, state, and federal policies.

County offices may also use these same agreements when planning and hosting their own events to maintain consistency and uphold best practices in risk management. The following section outlines the current list of approved agreements available for use.

1. North Dakota 4-H Code of Conduct Agreement

I have read and agree to abide by the North Dakota 4-H Code of Conduct. The full policy is available online. I am aware that by participating in any 4-H event or activity, my actions and decisions affect myself as well as others. I am aware that violations may result in consequences. Parents and legal guardians attending or participating in youth development programming also agree to conduct themselves according to the North Dakota 4-H Code of Conduct and assist and support youth in their efforts to adhere to the Expectations and Code.

2. Assumption of Risk and Release Statement

I hereby release, waive, discharge and covenant not to sue North Dakota State University, its officers, agents, employees, and North Dakota 4-H (hereinafter known as "NDSU") from all liability. In consideration of being permitted to participate in North Dakota 4-H, the undersigned, in full recognition and appreciation of the dangers and hazards inherent in any 4-H event or activity, does hereby agree to assume all the risks and responsibilities surrounding my participation therein, and further, do for myself, my heirs, and personal representatives, hold harmless, release and forever discharge NDSU from and against any and all liability, damages, claims, demands, actions, or causes of actions, on account of damage to personal property or personal injury or death which may result from my participation therein, whether caused by the negligence of NDSU or otherwise. The undersigned hereby assumes full responsibility for, and risk of bodily injury, death or property damage due to the negligence of the releases or otherwise while in, about or upon the premises of NDSU

or while participating in any and all North Dakota 4-H events or activities.

I hereby release and forever discharge the State of North Dakota, its agencies, officers, and employees, Extension employees that are paid 100% by their county, from any and all negligence and liability for the death, disability, personal injury, as a result of direct or indirect participation in any 4-H event or activity. I also waive any and all claims, demands, rights and causes of action of whatever kind that I may have, either on my own behalf or in my capacity as a legal representative of my child participant, arising from or in any way connected with my child's participation in 4-H.

I further covenant and agree that for the consideration stated above I will not sue the State of North Dakota, its agencies, officers, and employees for any claim for injury, sickness, or damages arising or growing out of my child's participation in the program.

I understand that the acceptance of this Release, Waiver of Liability, and Covenant not to sue shall not constitute a waiver, in whole or part, of sovereign immunity by said State, its agencies, officers, and employees. I certify that my child is participating in 4-H with my knowledge and consent.

By agreeing below, this indicates that I have carefully read and understood all of the above policies.

3. Media Release Statement

I hereby give permission to NDSU Extension to use any photographs, video, or audio of me (or my child, if under 18) taken by designated 4-H activity photographers for programs, promotions, websites, or for any other educational use by the NDSU Extension. I also recognize that these photographs, video, or audio tape are the property of the NDSU Extension.

4. Medical Authorization Statement

I understand that the 4-H'ers will be supervised and that, if a serious illness or injury develops, medical and/or hospital care will be given; however, the sponsor is not responsible in case of accidental injury or illness.

I understand that must a health problem arise, I will be notified but that if I cannot be reached, I hereby give permission to the attending physician to hospitalize, secure proper treatment for, and order injection,

anesthesia, or surgery, as deemed necessary for my child by competent medical personnel could be rendered; that such necessary information may be released for insurance purposes. I solemnly swear or affirm that the health history and medical information I have provided is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

I authorize the release of any medical records necessary for treatment, referral, billing, or insurance purposes and understand that I am financially responsible for charges and hereby guarantee full payment to the attending physicians and/or health care unit.

Furthermore, I am aware that participation in 4-H programming includes risk including, but not limited to, transportation to/from events, sports and recreational games, ropes courses, water activities, hiking, as well as risks that are not foreseeable. Risks also include exposure to contagious diseases and communicable illnesses, including but not limited to COVID-19.

5. Privacy Statement Authorization

The contact and health information requested on the Member Enrollment Form and Health Form is private. The information will be used as necessary to assist the member in the event of an emergency, to help ensure safe participation by the member in 4-H programs, and to provide information to the member about 4-H programs. You are not legally required to provide any of the requested information. You may not be allowed to participate, though, in 4-H or in specific programs if you fail to provide the requested information. Information will be shared with 4-H and North Dakota State University for the uses described above and may be released to outside organizations and government bodies in limited circumstances, as authorized by state or federal law.

6. Evaluation Release

I hereby establish my willingness to participate as an adult (i.e. 4-H leader, other volunteer, parent/guardian, site manager, etc.) and give permission for my child (under 18 years of age) to complete evaluations that will be used to determine program effectiveness or to promote the program.

I understand that participation in program evaluations is voluntary and that my child and I may choose not to participate and may withdraw from evaluations without impact on my or my child's eligibility to participate in the 4-H program.

I understand that my child or I may be asked for consent before completing an evaluation.

7. North Dakota 4-H Outdoor Skills Shooting Sports Informed Consent Form

I am the parent/legal guardian of and responsible for this youth who is enrolled in the Shooting Sports Program of the North Dakota 4-H Outdoor Skills Shooting Sports Program. I am aware, understand and accept the program and its continuing curriculum.

My child is enrolled in one of the following discipline areas of the 4-H Shooting Sports Program:

- Pistol (BB, Pellet, .22 and .38 cal)
- Rifle (BB, Pellet, .22 and .223 cal)
- Archery (Curve, Recurve and Compound)
- Black Powder (.32, .36, .44, .45 and .50 cal)
- Shotgun (.410, 28, 20, 16 and 12 gauge)

As a parent/legal guardian of an enrollee or enrollee in this discipline, I am aware of the sporting equipment involved, circumstances of its use and consequences of its misuse. I am aware of the fact that there is a potential physical danger to my child if precautions, safety and training are not provided and followed. With respect to this potential danger, those volunteers that are coaching and providing the instructional training will deem it necessary to instruct and discipline from time to time for the best interests of all involved. The foremost concern is safety with skill attainment and enjoyment second. I am also aware and understand that my child from time to time will be touched, moved and held in a manner to assist positioning, balance, comfort and provide continuity in curriculum training for the discipline being taught. I am also aware that even though my child enrolls in the 4-H Group Accident Policy this may not be adequate insurance coverage. I understand I may provide added coverage for accident and liability at my own expense. I therefore am aware of the program, instruction and training being taught, requirements of the shooting discipline, the risks involved and potential dangers if safety is not followed.

8. Health Policy Agreement (used at an event or activity)

I agree not to attend any events if I feel ill or have recently been exposed to viruses such as COVID-19 influenza respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) or measles. By registering, you acknowledge that there is an inherent risk of exposure to COVID-19, influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), measles, and other health conditions that exist in any public place where people are present. By attending this event, you and any guests voluntarily assume all risks related to exposure and release the event (including its affiliates, partners, speakers, employees, and

volunteers) from any and all liability for any illness or injury arising from or in any way related to this event. This event is subject to all local and state public health protocols and rules.

9. Virtual Meeting

By participating in this event, I acknowledge that the program will be recorded for educational purposes. I agree to my audio and video being used in that recording if and when I turn them on to participate in the program.

10. Transportation Liability Statement

I acknowledge that if transportation is provided by NDSU or North Dakota 4-H, I understand that the university and its representatives are not liable for any injuries, damages, or losses incurred during transportation. I assume full responsibility for any risks involved.

11. Behavioral Expectations and Consequences

I understand that participation in 4-H activities requires adherence to all rules, protocols, and expectations set forth by NDSU and North Dakota 4-H. Failure to comply with these rules may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to dismissal or suspension from the activity or program.

12. Special Needs and Accommodations

I understand that it is my responsibility to inform NDSU of any special needs or accommodations required for my youth, myself or others to have the best experience when participating in 4-H activities. I agree to provide this information in a timely manner to ensure proper arrangements can be made.

13. Parental Consent and Minor Participation

As the parent or legal guardian of a minor participant, I give my full consent for my child to participate in North Dakota 4-H activities. I acknowledge that I have read and understood all the assumptions of risk statements and agree to all terms on behalf of my child.

14. Confidentiality and Data Protection

I understand that all personal information provided will be kept confidential and used solely for the purposes stated in the privacy statement. I acknowledge that measures are in place to protect my data, but in the event of a data breach, NDSU is not liable for any resulting damages.

15. Financial Responsibility

I acknowledge that I am financially responsible for any costs incurred as a result of my or my child's participation in 4-H activities, including but not limited to medical expenses, travel costs, participation costs, and any damages to property.

16. Water Activities Risk Statement

I acknowledge that my or my child's participation in activities near or in water, such as swimming, boating, water sports, or ice activities carries inherent risks, including but not limited to drowning, injury from slips and falls, and waterborne illnesses. I agree to follow all safety protocols provided by NDSU and the 4-H program and I assume full responsibility for any risks involved in waterrelated activities.

YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

YPP06 (Revised February 2025)





Confidentiality Statement

for NDSU Extension Youth Development Programs

I, the undersigned, do hereby acknowledge that in my work for the NDSU Extension I will have access to confidential information contained in the records of volunteers, paid staff and/or 4-H members.

I agree that I will not disclose any such confidential information maintained by the NDSU Extension to any unauthorized person. This confidential information includes reference forms, reference checks, interviews, medical insurance, date of birth and other protected information.

I acknowledge that a proven breach of confidence could be cause for termination from my volunteer or paid staff position. Breach of confidence of information related to the North Dakota Child Abuse Information Index is against state law and could result in a Class B misdemeanor conviction.

Signature	Date
Print name	
If the above signature is that of a volunteer, I, the undersigned, deguidelines for confidentiality with the person named above.	o hereby certify that I have discussed the
Signature, NDSU Extension Representative/Supervisor	Date

NDSU EXTENSION

EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE >> CHANGING LIVES

County commissions, North Dakota State University and U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating, NDSU does not discriminate in its programs and activities on the basis of age, color, gender expression/identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, participation in lawful off-campus activity, physical or mental disability, physical or mental disability, physical or mental disability, physical or mental disabilities upon request, TOR-1770B, ridus used affosts.edu. This publication will be made available in alternative formats for people with disabilities upon request, TOR-231-7881.



North Dakota 4-H Open Enrollment Application

Applying for (check all that apply): Dual Enrollment Cross-County Line Enrollment 4-H Club Independent Member					
List 3 Independent Member Expectation	ons:				
Parent / Guardian Information					
Parent/guardian Name (Last, First, M.I.)					
Parent/Guardian Address					
County of Residence					
Home Telephone		Work Telep	bhone		
Member Information Member Name (Last, First, M.I.) – List only	one membe	r per applicat	ion	Date of Birth	
Application Type:	Family		Individual	<u> </u>	
List reason(s) for requesting open enrollment	t:	•			
Enrollment Information Current Enrolled 4-H County (if currently en	rallad)				
Current Enrolled 4-11 County (If currently ch	ironed)				
Admitting County					
The above information is true and correct	to the best	of my belie	f and knowled	dge.	
Signature of Parent/Guardian		Date			
Signature of Member	Date				
Submit this application to the NDSU Exte	ension offic	e of the adm	nitting county		
Date & Time Application Received by Admitting County Date Application Received Time Application Received (AM or PM) Signature NDSU Extension Representative					
Date Application Received Time Applicat	non Receive	u (AWI OI FIV.	1) Signature	NDSO Extension Representative	
Admitting County Approval/Disapproval Following review of this application for open enrollment, and with due consideration to the policies and rules applicable to open enrollment, and to the criteria of this county which have been developed for open enrollment, this application is hereby (check one): Approved – After action has been taken, this application must be immediately sent to the resident county, one copy sent to the parent/guardian within five days, and one copy kept in the files of the admitting county. Disapproved – After action has been taken, this application must be sent to the parent/guardian within five days, one					
copy sent to the resident county, and one copy kept in the files of the admitting county. The application was disapproved for the following reason(s):					
Signature of 4-H Council President		Date			

North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program Compliance and Best Practices Checklist

The compliance checklist is an invaluable resource for Extension agents, ensuring clarity and consistency in meeting the minimum requirements for a compliant 4-H program. By providing a clear framework, this checklist helps guide your planning for the year, ensuring that all activities align with the rules and policies of the North Dakota 4-H Program and NDSU Extension. It not only streamlines your program management but also supports maintaining high standards, fostering trust, and delivering a quality experience for all participants.



Policy: Not negotiable



Guideline: Strongly recommended best practice

4-H Youth Development

 Provide ongoing experiential learning opportunities for all youth to generate and grow essential life and work readiness skills



- Learn the 4-H Thriving Model to conduct highquality program settings to help youth thrive
- Use beyond ready program checklist when designing curriculum and programs.
- Work to set goals for the local 4-H program and evaluate its effectiveness
 - Bring all clubs together once a year for at least one service learning project
 - Support your council and clubs to set and manage
- Communicate to 4-H families regarding local, state and national opportunities.
- Create and submit at least one youth-related action plan in PEARS to document success (PEARS requirements can be found here)
 - Individual action plans are due Dec. 31
- · Create and submit at least one impact statement or one of the four success stories in PEARS



- Success stories due Jan. 5
- Impact Statement due Feb. 15
- May or may not be youth-related
- The Impact Statement or Success Stories must indicate an intent or actual change in participant(s) behaviors/practices or a positive change to an individual, family, business or community as a result of the program

Track educational program activities in PEARS



- Optional in PEARS: VI



- Track CRM (community and relationships management system, individual contacts)
- o Track Direct Contacts (monthly summary of direct contacts)
- Track QER (quarterly effort report, quarterly summary of direct contacts) due every quarter



- 1st quarter due April 15
- 2nd quarter due July 15
- 3rd quarter due Oct. 15
- 4th quarter due Jan. 15
- Become familiar with the North Dakota 4-H **Google Drive**



- 4-H Online and FairEntry help documents for enrollment and county fair/4-H Achievement Days guidance can be found here
- Connect with state 4-H specialists to support local goals



• Identify what 4-H program planning team you might enjoy cultivating creative work with



• Engage in professional development at the state, regional and local levels



- Join a professional organization (National Association of Extension 4-H Youth Development Professionals). NOTE: Talk to president first, your first year is significant discounted membership!
- Join the 4-H monthly newsletter call to stay connected, informed, and ask questions



· Consider joining any of the specialists' office hours to share, ask questions, or learn



 Share your spark and passion by supporting state 4-H events and activities (i.e. serve as a camp chair, superintendent at the North Dakota State Fair, help at a state judging contest, etc.)

4-H Club Management

• Supervise the use of the 4-H Name and Emblem (see 4-H Iconography)

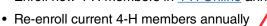


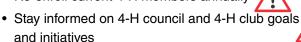
- Ensure that the use of the 4-H Name and Emblem for programs within or affiliated with the county complies with established policies (for detailed protocols, refer to the 4-H Name and Emblem Use Handbook)

• Ensure all 4-H clubs are chartered (each club must consist of three families and five youth)



• Enroll new 4-H members in 4-H Online annually







 Maintain regular communication with 4-H leaders and 4-H council members to evaluate annual progress (club visits, newsletters, social media, etc.)

 Provide training to new 4-H volunteers and club members (where to find resources, policy, code of conduct, etc.)



 Support community 4-H recruitment and retention (i.e. host community recruitment activities, campaign, other outreach efforts, awards banquets, volunteer retreats, etc.)

- · Maintain and update local Governance policy, bylaws, etc., every other year at minimum
- Monitor and Assist Clubs to Remain in Good Standing (see Filing Taxes):
 - Clubs must operate in a manner consistent with the North Dakota 4-H charter, policy and all other requirements for 4-H clubs
 - For further finance details, see Finance Policy for 4-H Councils and Clubs.
 - Update the active/inactive clubs list each year by July 15
- Encourage clubs to set goals for each 4-H member to give a communication presentation at least once per year



• Encourage 4-H club leaders to do a needs assessment for their clubs and report back to the 4-H council each year in an effort to establish annual goals and initiatives

4-H Volunteer Management

Volunteer Screening Checklist

All counties must follow the checklist in the ND 4-H Google Drive > Volunteers Folder > YPP Folder > Volunteer Screening Folder for all new 4-H volunteers.



All volunteers working directly with youth must:

- · Be screened using the Sterling platform and trained every 3 years
- Enroll annually in 4-H Online

One-time volunteers (e.g., judges, presenters) do **not** need to be screened if under the direct supervision of an enrolled and approved 4-H volunteer or Extension professional.

Enrolled 4-H members who turn 18 must also complete the volunteer screening process.



This policy ensures youth protection while supporting safe, meaningful adult involvement in 4-H.

Rescreening Volunteers Every Three Years (11.3):



- Volunteers complete a youth protection certification, background check, national sex offender screening, reading and agreeing to behavior expectations and confidentiality statements and other necessary forms
- Volunteers must undergo a recertification process every three years

Reporting Dismissed Volunteers (11.8):



 When a 4-H adult volunteer is terminated, this must be logged by the county and must be reported to the state 4-H office to document the information of the terminated volunteer

Training



- · Develop training, professional development, retreats and other opportunities while investing in supporting 4-H volunteers
- · Encourage volunteer participation in regional, state and national training opportunities
- Organize focus groups, committees, etc. to support goals, activities and events to ensure 4-H volunteers are an active part of planning and implementation of all 4-H activities

4-H Program Management

 Manage Records Kept at County Office (Record Retention Appendix):



- The 4-H Youth Development Program requires the compilation of many types of records on an annual basis
- Some records must be retained longer, and other records must be shredded annually due to identity theft-related concerns
- Ultimately, the NDSU Extension Agent is in charge of record retention and may designate this task to 4-H Youth Development Program staff
- If Required by the County, Tracking YQCA Training Completion (14.2):
 - If required by the county, keep an up-to-date record on member participation
 - YQCA training is required to exhibit at the state fair



- Contact the State Animal Science Specialist for a report

- Managing Reasonable Accommodations (12.4):
 - Extension agents are required to grant and facilitate reasonable accommodations
 - Extension agents are highly encouraged to document granted accommodations in the Accommodation Repository
- Communicating NDSU Non-Discrimination Statement (12.1):



- All flyers and materials/content must contain the following statement, which is required by federal law and the NDSU Policy: NDSU does not discriminate in its programs and activities on the basis of age, color, gender expression/identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, participation in lawful offcampus activity, physical or mental disability, pregnancy, public assistance status, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, spousal relationship to current employee, or veteran status, as applicable. Direct inquiries to Vice Provost, Title IX/ADA Coordinator, Old Main 100, (701) 231-7701, ndsu.

· Confirm and monitor registration of youth in 4-H Online (4.3):

eoaa@ndsu.edu.



Maintain a viable communication system



- Build connections and meaningful relationships
- Connect and communicate on a regular basis
- Provide resources and deadlines with frequent reminders
- Empower 4-H volunteers to support all 4-H programing efforts
- Engage in recognition efforts
 - Recognize committees, 4-H volunteers, and other valuable relationships in diverse ways (i.e. social media, newsletter, newspaper, radio, personal thank you notes, awards banquet, submit for national awards, etc.)

Additional Resources for Extension Agents

NDSU Extension Handbook for Extension Agents Working Effectively With Advisory Councils and Other **Leadership Groups**

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QofF-J-f8JsBcP-2N1xHG DyzSg1arnf7/view

NDSU Extension 4-H YouTube

https://www.youtube.com/user/NDSUExt4H/videos?app =desktop

NDSU Extension YouTube

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrezUZG By8SF0UGUSqVSuw

Sharepoint-Agricultural Communication (need login credentials)

https://ndusbpos.sharepoint.com/sites/NDSU agcomm/ SitePages/NDSU-Agriculture.aspx

What is North Dakota 4-H?

https://youtu.be/NqFUsGPcRek

Website:

https://www.ndsu.edu/agriculture/extension/what-nd-4-h

What is a 4-H Project?

https://youtu.be/Tw1z3qQV 6o

What is a 4-H Contest?

https://youtu.be/mhfXqkMLtvg

Main North Dakota 4-H Facebook Page

https://www.facebook.com/northdakota4h

ND 4-H Animal Science Facebook Page

https://www.facebook.com/NDSUextension4Hanimal science

ND 4-H Camp Facebook Page

https://www.facebook.com/ND4HCamp

ND 4-H Shooting Sports Facebook Page

https://www.facebook.com/NorthDakota4HShootingSports

MAIN National 4-H Facebook Page

https://www.facebook.com/4-h

NAE4-HYDP Idea Sharing Facebook Page

(SUPER helpful!)

https://www.facebook.com/groups/157028244387954

NAE4-HYDP page

https://www.nae4hydp.org/

ND 4-H Google Drive

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1QMj-jOSGxMyc3 PQAjaHHhBq mlxTQW 3?usp=drive link

4-H Foundation Google Drive

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1kCydthu19Mf6hMF S4kGrHRoq7gaxqgCj?usp=drive link

NDSU Ag Affairs Strategic Plan

https://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/vpag/NDSU-Agriculture StrategicPlanFinal.pdf

National 4-H Strategic Plan

https://4-h.org/about/strategic-plan/

NDSU Strategic Plan - President Cook

https://www.ndsu.edu/president/presidents_councils_and_ initiatives/strategic_plan/

USDA Strategic Plan

https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/usdafy-2022-2026-strategic-plan.pdf

Secure File Transfer

https://kb.ndsu.edu/page.php?id=98967

4-H Thriving Model for PYD

https://helping-youth-thrive.extension.org/home/

4-H Beyond Ready Resources

https://4-h.org/resources/professionals/marketingresources/beyond-ready-resources/

Volunteer Screening

All volunteer screening and training content can be found on the ND 4-H Google Drive in the Volunteer Folder > YPP - Youth Protection Folder > Volunteer Training/Screening Folder:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/195bGkMqn6BW4GtsDZJIJmX72LREcLAfw?usp=drive_link

YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

YPP21 (Revised August 2025)



EXTENSION



North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program

FAQs for North Dakota 4-H Volunteers

Essential Information for Your Sterling Volunteers Journey

olunteers play a critical role in strengthening the mission and success of NDSU Extension programs. As part of our ongoing commitment to youth safety and program quality, NDSU Extension is implementing a new volunteer screening process using Sterling Volunteers, a trusted third-party background check provider. This new process will be integrated with 4-H Online starting Sept. 16, 2025.

What is Sterling Volunteers?

Sterling Volunteers is a secure, third-party service that the North Dakota State University Extension 4-H Youth Development Program uses to conduct background screenings. It allows volunteers to manage their background check information and share results with other organizations if the screening was completed through Sterling Volunteers within the last 12 months.

Why do I need to complete a background check, and who is required to be screened?

All North Dakota 4-H volunteers who work directly with youth are required to complete a background check every three years, be trained by NDSU Extension professionals and enroll annually in 4-H Online. This includes enrolled 4-H members who turn 18 years old. This policy helps protect youth while encouraging meaningful and safe adult involvement in the 4-H program.

One-time volunteers, such as judges or presenters, who are under the direct supervision of an enrolled and approved 4-H volunteer or NDSU Extension professional, do not need to be screened.

How will I be notified to complete the background check?

You will enroll in 4-H Online, and once you complete your enrollment, you will be prompted on the 4-H Online Screening page to complete your background check through the Sterling Volunteers website.

What information will I need to provide?

You'll be asked to provide the following information:

- · Full legal name
- · Date of birth
- Social Security number (for identity verification)
- · Address history
- · Consent to the background check

What does the Sterling Volunteer background check include?

The background check process includes the following:

- · National Criminal History Search
- County/State-level Criminal Background Check
- · Department of Justice (DOJ) Sex Offender Search
- Terrorist Watchlist (OFAC)

Is there a cost to me?

No.

Is my personal information secure?

The Sterling Volunteers platform is highly secure and complies with all national and local regulations regarding the storage and transmission of sensitive data. It is hosted in ISO 27001-audited data centers and undergoes regular audits throughout the year by external vendors to ensure ongoing compliance and security.

All personal information is encrypted both at rest and in transit within the Sterling Volunteers system. The platform employs a comprehensive suite of security tools, including firewalls, data loss prevention technologies and real-time monitoring systems, to guard against hackers, viruses and other cyber threats.

How long does it take to complete the screening?

The online form takes 10-15 minutes to complete. Most background checks are processed within three to five business days.

What happens after I complete the screening?

Once processed, the results are shared with the NDSU Extension 4-H Youth Development Program State Office and appear in 4-H Online. If you are approved, you will receive an email from your NDSU Extension county office with next steps, and Sterling Volunteers will communicate your status in 4-H Online.

If you are not eligible, you will receive a pre-adverse action letter from Sterling Volunteers.

Who has access to my results?

Only authorized NDSU Extension 4-H Youth Development Program State Office staff responsible for volunteer onboarding and screening will view your background check results. All data is handled in compliance with privacy and confidentiality guidelines.

What if someone does not want to complete the background screening but still wants to work with youth or provide instruction in the name of 4-H?

Individuals who refuse to complete the required screening process are not allowed to serve as North Dakota 4-H volunteers or represent 4-H in any instructional or supervisory capacity involving youth. This includes leading activities, teaching workshops or providing instruction under the 4-H name.

Only screened, trained and approved volunteers may serve in roles that directly involve youth. This policy helps protect youth while encouraging meaningful and safe adult involvement in the 4-H program.

Questions?

For more information or help with the screening process, contact:

Tyler Johnson NDSU Extension – 4-H Youth Development tyler.johnson@ndsu.edu, 701-231-7251

www.sterlingvolunteers.com for technical support and password resets.

County commissions, North Dakota State University and U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating, NDSU does not discriminate in its programs and activities on the basis of age, color, gender expression/identity, genetic information, marrial status, national origin, participation in lawful off-campus activity, physical or mental disability, pregnancy, public assistance status, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, spousal relationship to current employee, or veteran status, as applicable. Direct inquiries to Vice Provost, Title (XIADA Coordinator, Old Main 100, 701-231-77801, ndsu-coae afford out. This publication will be made available in alternative formats for people with disabilities upon enquest, 701-231-7881.

Adult Chaperone Expectations for 4-H and Other Youth Events

YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

YPP08 (March 2025)



EXTENSION



Chaperone Code of Conduct

for NDSU Extension Youth Development Programs

North Dakota State University Extension is dedicated to the positive development of North Dakota youth and families. Active and caring chaperones are crucial to the success of our youth programs and to ensuring a safe environment. The purpose of this set of responsibilities is to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants.

Chaperones are expected to respect, adhere to and enforce the following policies and expectations established by NDSU Extension youth programs:

- Chaperone to Youth Ratio: A minimum of one responsible adult (at least 18 years old) will be assigned for every eight to 10 youth for any NDSU Extension youth-related activities involving an overnight stay. This aligns with national 4-H guidelines.
- Eligibility: Chaperones must meet the established age for the event and be screened and approved through the Youth Protection Policy.
- Code of Conduct: Chaperones must follow all expectations outlined in the 4-H Youth Development Program Code of Conduct (YDP 1002).
- Role Model: Chaperones must be positive role models and lead by example, demonstrating the Six Pillars of Character: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring and Citizenship. Tobacco use in any form (vaping devices) is not allowed during 4-H chaperone duties.
- Support NDSU Extension: Chaperones must be willing to represent, promote and support NDSU Extension in developing an effective county, state and national youth program.
- Required Documentation: Chaperones must complete all necessary documents, such as the North Dakota 4-H Youth Development Program Code of Conduct, Adult 4-H Health Form, Media Release, Assumption of Risk and Release, Volunteer Request to Operate a State Vehicle and proof of insurance.
- Communication: Chaperones must maintain regular communication with participants and Extension professionals before, during and after the event. Chaperones will participate in any scheduled pre-event orientation or conference calls. Access to email and a cell phone is required.
- Event Rules: Chaperones must be familiar with and follow the workshop/event rules and expectations. If there are no established rules, chaperones will collaborate with the event coordinator to create rules that all youth understand, such as behavior expectations, meeting times, lights-out times and the buddy system.
- Safety and Welfare: Chaperones must ensure participants' welfare and safety. Chaperones assist in developing a positive community spirit among all participants. Chaperones must report behavior issues immediately. Chaperones should know the event guidelines and consequences for unacceptable behavior, such as sending youth home.
- Attendance: Chaperones must attend all adult chaperone briefings before or during the event. Chaperones will share information from these meetings with youth participants and assist with the event as requested by the event coordinator.
- Youth Documentation: Chaperones are responsible for having the required documents for all youth and adult participants for the specific event, such as a signed 4-H Participant Code of Conduct, Media Release and Health Form.

Continued on page 2

NDSU EXTENSION

EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE >> CHANGING LIVES

County commissions, North Dakota State University and U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating. NDSU does not discriminate in its programs and activities on the basis of age, color, gender expression/identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, participation in lawful off-campus activity, physical or mental disability, pregnancy, public assistance status, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, spousal relationship to current employee, or veteran status, as applicable. Direct inquiries to Vice Provost, Title IX/ADA Coordinator, Old Main 100, 701-231-7708, ndsu.eoaa@ndsu.edu. This publication will be made available in alternative formats for people with disabilities upon request, 701-231-7881.

- Full Involvement: Chaperones must encourage and monitor full involvement of all participants in all activities. Chaperones help participants evaluate what they see, hear and do to ensure a safe and positive environment.
- Trip Expectations: Chaperones must review the Code of Conduct, vehicle etiquette and trip expectations with youth. Examples include prohibiting members lying down together in the back of the bus and ensuring participants are in their rooms by a set time.
- Rooming Policies: Chaperones are responsible for ensuring all youth adhere to designated event rules and curfews. Youth must room with other youth, and an adult will not share a room with an unrelated child. Unrelated adults and youth will not share lodging.
- Digital Guidelines: Chaperones must know the event's social media expectations (such as appropriate use of photos, prohibited sharing of personal youth information, participants' phone usage, etc.) and help enforce them.
- Room Assignments: Chaperones must use best practices in room assignments based on gender and developmentally appropriate ages.
- Abuse Prevention: Chaperones abstain from and do not tolerate physical, verbal or emotional abuse. Respect the privacy of youth and others. In situations lacking privacy, such as changing clothes or taking showers, chaperones should only intrude to the extent that health and safety require.
- Reporting Issues: Chaperones must promptly alert the workshop or event coordinator(s) of any problems to be addressed and work with coordinators to fill out appropriate reports if necessary. This includes being aware of emergency protocols. Chaperones must contact the appropriate NDSU Extension office immediately if a accident or infraction occurs.
- Inspection: Chaperones must inspect luggage or rooms when reasonable suspicion exists of a violation of law or NDSU Extension event rules has occurred. Chaperones must notify the coordinator if the conduct of adult staff, volunteers or youth is unacceptable. The event coordinator may notify law enforcement.

Complying with the Adult Chaperone Code of Conduct is essential for all NDSU Extension professionals and volunteers. Failure to comply with any component of these expectations or participation in inappropriate behavior as determined by NDSU Extension representatives may lead to dismissal as a volunteer from the NDSU Extension youth program, as identified in the NDSU Extension Youth Development Programs Code of Conduct (YPP01 and YPP02).

Thank you for your dedication to the growth and success of North Dakota's youth. As a chaperone, you play a vital role in creating a safe, engaging and transformative experience that equips youth with lifelong skills. Your leadership and guidance directly contributes to their personal development, resilience and confidence. Beyond making a lasting impact, you also gain invaluable leadership experience, the opportunity to build meaningful connections and the reward of seeing youth thrive in a positive environment. We appreciate your commitment to shaping the next generation of Beyond Ready youth!

Chaperone signature:	Date:	_
Extension professional signature:	Date:	

NDSU EXTENSION

EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE >> CHANGING LIVES

Chaperone Code of Conduct for NDSU Extension Youth Development Programs | 2

Appropriate Delegation to Volunteers

Volunteers are critical to the success of 4-H and perform many roles that enable 4-H to carry out its mission. 4-H Volunteers serving in various roles such as chaperone, activity helper, guest speaker, judge, committee member or event facilitator provide crucial support to the 4-H program. A 4-H volunteer may serve in a variety of capacities based on their interests, skills and time. Opportunities range from short-term to long-term commitments.

The following resources have been developed to help Extension Agents think about appropriate and inappropriate use of volunteer time.

A volunteer may serve in, but is not limited to, the following capacities:

4-H club leader

- Leadership: Provides overall guidance and structure to the 4-H club, helping to plan meetings, organize activities, and support youth development.
- . Mentorship: Builds relationships with youth and families, fostering a welcoming and inclusive club environment that encourages growth and participation.
- Liaison Role: Works closely with Extension staff to ensure club activities align with county and state policies, and supports communication between the county office and club members.

Chaperone

- Supervision: Ensuring the safety and well-being of 4-H members during events, trips and activities.
- Behavior management: Monitoring and managing member behavior, and maintaining a positive and respectful environment.
- Support role: Assisting the club leader and other volunteers with logistical needs during events.

Program or activity helper

- Facilitation: Assisting in the execution of specific activities or projects as directed by the club leader.
- Guidance: Providing hands-on support and guidance to youth during activities, ensuring they understand and engage with the tasks.
- Logistics: Helping set up and clean-up activities, manage supplies and ensure a smooth operation.

Guest speaker

- Expertise sharing: Bringing specialized knowledge or skills to the club, offering workshops, presentations or demonstrations.
- Inspiration: Inspiring and motivating youth by sharing experiences, stories and expertise in a particular field.
- Short-term engagement: Typically involved in a single event or a short series of events rather than ongoing club activities.

Judge at county fair or 4-H Achievement Days

- Evaluation: Assessing and judging entries in various categories, providing constructive feedback to participants.
- Fairness and objectivity: Ensuring a fair and unbiased judging process, upholding the integrity of the competition.

Skill instructor or coach

- **Teaching:** Providing instruction in specific skills or areas of expertise, helping youth develop new competencies.
- Hands-on learning: Engaging youth in practical, hands-on learning experiences to reinforce skill acquisition.
- Contests/events: Bringing youth to test their knowledge, refine their skills and engage in experiential learning opportunities at events, camps or contests.

Committee member or key role in event management

- Leadership: Serving in key roles on planning committees for events such as fairs or achievement days.
- Event coordination: Helping manage and drive forward local fairs or achievement days, ensuring successful planning and execution.
- Facilitation: Assisting in the facilitation and management of events, ensuring smooth operation and positive experiences for all participants.

Extension agents must avoid using volunteers to perform tasks germane to their role as Extension agents, in a role that breaks any stated North Dakota 4-H policy, or in a way that is not consistent with federal, state, and local laws.

Examples of Inappropriate volunteer roles include the following:

- Calling 4-H families across the county without an Extension office delegation (volunteers may only contact families within their own club)
- Completing and submitting the EZ 1023 nonprofit form on behalf of the county without approval from the NDSU Extension office
- Signing contracts, rental agreements or facility use forms on behalf of the Extension office or county 4-H program

These limitations exist for a number of reasons.

Legal and privacy concerns

 Contact information of 4-H families is protected.
 Volunteers do not operate under the same confidentiality protocols as staff.

Authority and representation

- A volunteer contacting families on behalf of the county can unintentionally misrepresent their authority.
- Staff are trained to communicate policies accurately and uniformly.

Clarity and consistency for all families

- County-wide outreach must be equitable and unbiased.
- Volunteers must not be in positions where they could influence or gatekeep access to programs beyond their club.

Risk management

- Improper contact may lead to complaints or misunderstandings, with liability falling on the county office.
- Formal communications must be documented and traceable — something informal volunteer calls cannot ensure.

Summary Policy Statement



Volunteers can and must communicate within their own 4-H club context. However, broader county-wide outreach must come from — or be explicitly authorized by — the Extension office to protect confidentiality, ensure consistent messaging and uphold professionalism and inclusive access.

In rare cases, a volunteer may be formally delegated a specific communication task by Extension staff. This delegation must be clearly defined, time-limited and coordinated to ensure accuracy and alignment with county expectations.

Possible Exception: Delegated Communication Role

A volunteer may contact families outside their club only if all the following conditions are met:

1. Explicit delegation by Extension staff

- The volunteer is assigned a specific task (e.g., calling scholarship recipients or confirming RSVPs).
- Expectations and purpose are clearly documented (e.g., via email or meeting minutes).

2. Limited scope and purpose

- The task has a defined beginning and end.
- Message content is approved or scripted by the county office.

3. Controlled access to contact information

- · Only necessary contact information is shared.
- No contact lists are stored, reused, or shared.

4. Clear framing to families

- The volunteer identifies their role as assisting the Extension office — not acting as it.
- Example: "Hi, this is Casey, a volunteer with [committee name], calling on behalf of the Extension office to confirm your RSVP for..."

Still Not Permitted If:



- The volunteer is acting independently without Extension oversight
- The content of outreach is personal, promotional, or not previously approved
- The volunteer has access to full family contact lists without a specific need

Volunteer Conflict Resolution Appendix

4-H is dedicated to investing in its volunteers, helping them grow and thrive alongside its youth participants. Volunteers are essential to the success of the programs, and 4-H is committed to providing support, guidance, and opportunities for development.

North Dakota 4-H believes in addressing minor issues through informal corrective actions, promoting a culture of learning and improvement. For more significant or persistent issues, North Dakota 4-H implements disciplinary actions to ensure that volunteers maintain the high standard required in 4-H while fostering a safe environment for all youth participants.

In cases of the most serious transgressions such as partaking in illegal actions, creating a hostile environment or behaving violently, 4-H takes immediate suspension or dismissal actions to protect the safety and integrity of the program.

Holding volunteers accountable is crucial to maintaining the trust, safety and integrity of the 4-H program. By adhering to these principles, 4-H ensures a positive and productive environment where both volunteers and youth can thrive.

This section has been designed to provide a framework for dealing with conflict and incidents as they occur with 4-H volunteers, but can be looked to for guidance on other types of conflict.

Incidents are defined as anything that goes against North Dakota 4-H policy or the intent of the 4-H mission.

Incident severity varies, and because of this, it is important to have a process that can distinguish and handle these levels. This framework has four levels of escalation, described further in the following sections.

When conflicts occur, corrective action may include any of the following:

Informal Corrective Action

INFORMAL CORRECTIVE ACTION

Incident Occurs

The resolution begins with the Extension county agent, documentation of time, date, individuals involved and description of the incident from individuals involved (at least two).

Verbal Conversation

Talk with the individual expressing behavior concerns correlated to relevant policy items and agree on actionable feedback and/or improvement plans.

Improvement Plan

Identify and document tools and solution-driven ideas to ensure said behavior does not happen again.

Follow Up

Check in within two to three months to see how tools and goals are managed.

If improvements are being made...

Continue to monitor. No further action is needed.

If actions remain or worsen...

Escalate to disciplinary action.

When to use the informal corrective action process:

- · Minor problems in behavior, attitude, management or performance
- · Examples may include foul language use in front of youth, showing an activity instead of letting youth do the activity, consistently arriving late to events or activities, inconsistent participation, negative attitude during activities, etc.

Key Points for Informal Corrective Action

- Private conversations: Always address issues in a private setting to avoid embarrassment.
 - Have a conversation with the individual (preferably face-to-face), expressing behavior concerns and how the behavior is problematic. Point to components of the 4-H Code of Conduct or other relevant North Dakota 4-H Policy that might be violated.

- Cover how behavior does not align with the current 4-H mission/code of conduct (behavioral expectations) — document time, date, individuals involved and description of the incident from several individuals involved (at least two if available).
- Timely action: Conversations must be timely strive to meet with the individual within seven days of the alleged incident.
 - Conversation is followed up by an email to the individual to document the conversation and provide relevant reference documents.
 - You may be tempted to text or email concerns to the individual because it is less uncomfortable. This initial conversation must be verbal (face-to-face or a telephone call)
- Positive reinforcement: Acknowledge the volunteer's strengths and contributions before addressing the issue.
- Clear expectations: Clearly explain the expected behavior and why it's important.
 - The purpose of the initial conversation is to curb misbehavior early in an informal setting. This must be about providing helpful and actionable feedback for the volunteer to improve.
 - An Improvement Plan might include coaching, training, mentoring or a position change. A Resolution Plan might include adjustment to group agreements; parties agreeing to work on behavior, attitude or performance; adjustment to a meeting process/structure; agree to disagree, but agree to follow the direction of the activity lead.
- Collaborative approach: Work with the volunteer to find solutions and make improvements together.
 - Identify and document tools and solution-driven ideas on how to ensure said behavior does not happen again.
- Follow-up: Check in with the volunteer later to see if improvements have been made and to offer further support if needed.
 - Check in within two to three months to see how tools and goals are being managed. Document discussion.
 - Make sure to document each incident, conversation, solutions and goals well and maintain details in a safe and secure location.
- Confidentiality: Always keep accrued details confidential at all times.

Constructive Conversation Example for Conflict Resolution

The following example was developed in collaboration with Emily Burkett, NDSU Extension 4-H Youth Development agent in Ward County, and Samantha Lahman, NDSU Extension 4-H animal science specialist, to provide a constructive framework for addressing challenging or sensitive situations involving youth participants, families and volunteers.

This conversation guide is intended to support county Extension staff and volunteers in navigating conflict with empathy, transparency and professionalism — while upholding the core values of 4-H youth development. It emphasizes clear communication, respectful behavior, youth-led engagement and a shared commitment to a positive program experience.

This tool may be used in the following situations:

- · Expectations between families and volunteers are unclear
- · There is a history of poor communication or misunderstanding
- A youth's participation in the program requires clarification or a reset
- · Staff need to reinforce behavioral expectations or reestablish boundaries

This example is not a one-size-fits-all script, but a guide to help staff lead calm, solution-focused conversations rooted in 4-H principles. Staff may adapt the format to fit their local context or individual situation, while ensuring it remains consistent with 4-H policy and the North Dakota 4-H Code of Conduct.

Part 1 — All Present (Youth Participant and Supportive Adults)

Welcome and Purpose:

"We're here today to make sure this is a successful and enjoyable year, and to ensure we're all on the same page."

Reinforce Program Values:

"Our program is centered around positive youth development—helping young people build leadership, responsibility, and life skills. Our goal is to support the youth in growing and succeeding, not just in contests, but as confident and capable individuals."

This reinforces the expectation that adults support from the sidelines and respect the decisions of volunteers and judges.

Ask the Youth Participant:

"What would you like to get out of your experience this

Explore their goals, interests, and what they're excited about.

Clarify what is and isn't possible this year based on program policies, logistics, or past concerns.

"We're here to support you and help set you up for a great year."

Clarify Adult Roles:

"Our program is youth-led. Adults are here to guide and support, but the experience must be driven by the young person."

Part 2 — Adults Only (Youth Steps Out Briefly)

Transition:

"Thank you. We'd like to speak privately with the adults for a few minutes."

Set the Tone:

"We want this to be a positive experience, which requires respectful and clear communication between families and our office."

Address Communication Concerns:

"We've had some communication challenges in the past. Let's talk about how that can improve moving forward."

Consider asking:

- "Would it help to designate one main contact for communications?"
- "Are there preferences for how we share important updates?"

Optional: Provide documentation (emails, social media posts, etc.) to demonstrate past communication and transparency.

Emphasize Respect for Volunteers:

"Our volunteers are the backbone of this program. It's vital they feel respected and supported so they can continue to offer these opportunities."

Clarify Past Decisions:

Example: "There was a previous message indicating withdrawal from the program, which is why communications ceased. We understand this would be frustrating, not to receive other reminders. That decision was based on what we understood at the time."

Ask Constructively:

- · "What do you need from us to feel informed and supported?"
- "Where do you see opportunities for better communication?"
- "How can we collaborate to ensure a better experience moving forward?"

Confirm a Commitment:

"Can we agree today to maintain clear and respectful communication so the youth can have a successful experience?"

Part 3 — Youth Returns

Positive Re-entry:

"We're excited to have you involved this year! Here are some fun things to look forward to..."

List examples like making friends, participating in events, learning new things, etc.

Clarify Participation Protocols (If Needed):

"Some participants may not be eligible for certain awards, but we will handle that respectfully and confidentially."

Review Expectations:

- "We expect respectful behavior at all times."
- "Any inappropriate behavior may result in removal from events or the program."
- "We're committed to a fresh start and will not revisit past issues moving forward."

Document the Agreement:

"We'll follow up with a brief summary of what we discussed and agreed upon to ensure shared understanding. We'll also review and sign the 4-H Code of Conduct."

If the Meeting Turns Hostile

"It seems this program may not meet your expectations. At this time, we will not move forward with enrollment. We sincerely hope you find a program that aligns better with your values and expectations."

Disciplinary Action

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Incident Occurs

Resolution begins with Extension county agent; documentation of time, date, individuals involved and description of the incident from individuals involved (at least two)

Notify District Director

Within 48 hours of notification of the incident and any prior corrective actions, outline policy infractions and talk through communication strategies if needed.

Inform Grievance Committee

Inform the grievance committee and discuss potential outcomes; provide all details collected since the initial incident. Communicate policy infractions. The grievance committee decides on the severity and potential improvement plan.

Verbal Conversation

Have a conversation within five days of the occurrence of the individual expressing behavioral concerns.

Improvement Plan

Identify and document tools and solution-driven ideas to ensure said behavior does not happen again.

If improvements are being made...

Continue to monitor. No further action is needed.

If actions remain or worsen...

Escalate to dismissal action.

When to use the disciplinary action process:

- Problems in behavior, attitude, management or performance that affect more than a small group of people
- Examples of this may include repeated foul language with no improvement, disrupting 4-H club meetings, consistently poor attitude, failure to follow 4-H policies and procedures, etc.
- No improvement from an Informal Corrective Action

Key Points for Disciplinary Action

- Formal documentation: Document all incidents and previous informal corrective actions. Maintain records of formal warnings and disciplinary meetings.
 - Document with details date, time, individuals involved and description of incident. Add details to illustrate how the incident is not aligned with any North Dakota 4-H Policy (Youth Protection Policy [YPP], North Dakota 4-H Code of Conduct, etc.). For example goes against respect volunteers used foul and inappropriate language (curse words) when disagreeing with a fair board member.
- Clear communication: Clearly explain the specific behaviors that are problematic, the impact on the group and the steps needed for improvement.
 - Within five days of the incident, arrange a meeting with individuals involved to discuss the incident.
 Work through solutions, gaps in communication and identify to individuals this is the last allowed incident before dismissal. Discuss ways to ensure growth and how this incident will be avoided in the future from both parties. Discuss with the district director crucial conversation methods that apply (create a canned set of leading transitions that are not accusatory, make sure to listen and not get defensive, etc.)
 - Ensure there are at least three positive items listed that this individual does well.
 - Appraise your grievance committee on the matter; keep details discrete and relevant. See section regarding grievances for guidance on establishing a grievance committee.
- Consequences: Outline the consequences of continued inappropriate behavior, including potential suspension or dismissal from volunteer duties.
- **Support and Resources:** Provide potential resources for improvement, such as workshops, training sessions or counseling, to help the volunteer address the issues.
- Follow-up: Schedule follow-up meetings to review progress and ensure that the volunteer is adhering to the improvement plan. Document these follow-ups for reference.
- Consistency: Apply disciplinary actions consistently to ensure fairness and maintain the integrity of the volunteer program.

These examples and key points must help volunteers understand the seriousness of certain behaviors and the steps involved in disciplinary actions, promoting a positive and productive environment within the 4-H program.

Dismissal Action

DISMISSAL ACTION

Incident Occurs

The resolution begins with the Extension county agent, documentation of time, date, individuals involved, and a description of the incident from individuals involved (at least two).

Notify District Director

Within 48 hours of notification of the incident and any prior corrective actions. talk through communication strategies if needed.

Notify Grievance Committee

Inform the grievance committee and discuss potential outcomes; provide all details collected since the initial incident. Identify the length of time between incidents. Communicate policy infractions. The Grievance Committee decides on the severity and potential improvement plan:

- · Dismissed indefinitely
- · Dismissed for a period of time (i.e., one year, three years, etc.)
- · Probation for six months and develop an improvement plan

Verbal Conversation

Have a conversation within five days of the occurrence. The district director must be present.

If dismissing, write an official letter See below for key elements to include.

Present Dismissal Letter

Include appeals process information.

When to use the progressive dismissal process:

- Problems of a serious nature or repeated over time and no improvement from an Informal Corrective and Disciplinary Action
- Examples may include misuse of club funds, falsified contest records, repeated inappropriate behavior despite warnings, violation of safety policies, hazing, failure to adhere to other policies, etc.

Key Points for Progressive Dismissal

• Thorough investigation: Ensure all incidents are thoroughly investigated and evidence is documented.

- Identify the length of time between the first and second incident. Decide whether this is grounds for dismissal at this point (Example: Three incidents within a year vs three incidents in 20 years).
- If severe enough, have a written letter in a folder that is set aside dismissing the volunteer. Do not give this to volunteers until after the meeting. Each case is different, and after hearing this incident, you may or may not choose to dismiss the volunteer.
- You may decide to bring the evidence and details gathered from this meeting to your grievance committee to decide how to move forward (see example below)
- Documentation: Maintain detailed records of all incidents, meetings and actions taken throughout the process.
 - Keep accrued details confidential from all three incidents. Use your detailed conversation notes, witness notes and other details as your evidence to remind this volunteer of previous incidents and how they directly go against policy.
- Clear communication: Clearly communicate the reasons for dismissal, referencing specific incidents and previous corrective and disciplinary actions taken.
- Formal meetings: Conduct formal meetings with the volunteer, involving senior committee members or legal representatives if necessary, to ensure the volunteer fully understands the reasons for their dismissal.
 - Grievance committee decides on severity and potential improvement plan:
 - Dismissed indefinitely
 - O Dismissed for one year with an eight-month check-in to determine possible extension of suspension
 - Probation for six months and develop an improvement plan
- · Consistency and fairness: Apply the dismissal process consistently to all volunteers to ensure fairness and uphold the program's integrity.
- Support for affected parties: Provide support and resources to those affected by the volunteer's actions, such as counseling or additional supervision for youth participants.
- Final call: The final decision lies with the local NDSU Extension agent. Make sure to establish terms moving forward with clear guidance and instructions, including a description of how they can appeal the decision.

• Dismissal letter: When writing an official letter to dismiss a volunteer, it is critical to ensure that the communication is professional, clear and aligned with organizational policy. Here are the key elements to include:

1. Clear identification

- Full name of the volunteer.
- Role/title and the program or activity involved.

2. Dates

- Date of the letter.
- Date(s) of incidents or concerns leading to dismissal.
- Start date of volunteer's service (optional but helpful for context).

3. Policy Reference

- Clearly cite specific policies, codes of conduct or organizational values that have been violated (Example: "This action is in violation of the NDSU Extension Youth Protection Policy section YPP02...").

4. Description of the issue

- Provide factual, objective details of the behavior or incident(s) that led to the dismissal.
- Include any previous corrective actions, warnings or conversations held.

5. Dismissal terms

- Specify if the dismissal is permanent/indefinite or a suspension (with a defined time frame and review process, if applicable).

6. Next steps/Appeal process

- If applicable, outline the opportunity for appeal or next steps for resolution or reinstatement.

7. Statement of finality

- Confirm that this decision is official and effective immediately unless otherwise stated.

8. Tone and closure

- Remain respectful and professional, avoiding inflammatory language.
- Express appreciation for past contributions (if appropriate).
- Close with a signature and contact information for questions.

Immediate Suspension or Dismissal

IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION OR DISMISSAL

Incident Occurs

NDSU Extension agent issues immediate suspension until further notice if warranted; immediate suspension notification must be in writing, and verbal immediate suspension must be followed up with a formal letter.

Documentation of Relevant **Evidence**

Document with details of date, time, individuals involved and description of the incident. Add details to illustrate how the incident is not aligned with any North Dakota 4-H Policy.

Notify the State Volunteer Specialist

Discuss if any outside groups (i.e., law enforcement) or additional groups (i.e., other Extension agents etc.) may need to be involved and involve them within 72 hours of the incident.

Notify Volunteer in Writing

Use above details for dismissal letter.

Inform Grievance Committee

Work with the grievance committee to investigate the incident and either recommend reinstatement or confirm the suspension.

Potentially reinstate the volunteer with conditions

Written details of conditions with a meeting and signature from the volunteer acknowledging understanding and agreement to the said conditions.

When to use this process:

 Transgressions of the most serious nature: may include alleged illegal actions, contribution to a hostile environment, violent or abusive behavior,

Key Points for Immediate Suspension or Dismissal

- Swift action: Act immediately upon learning of serious transgressions to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants.
 - Immediate actions may include the individual being removed from the worksite/meeting place, relieved of duties or escorted from the premises.
 - It is important to involve relevant outside groups as warranted in a timely manner. Extension agents are

- mandatory reporters, and thus, if an incident occurs, they must use designated reporting processes in a timely or expedited manner to help address the incident.
- Thorough documentation: Document all allegations, actions taken and findings of any investigations.
- Clear communication: Clearly communicate the reasons for suspension or dismissal, referencing specific incidents and the seriousness of the transgressions.
- · Director notifies the volunteer of final action in writing, which may include reinstatement of volunteer status, changes to volunteer status (e.g., limited appointment) or immediate dismissal/retirement.
- Involvement of authorities: In cases involving illegal actions or violence, involve law enforcement or other relevant authorities as required.
 - District directors and the assistant director for the 4-H Youth Development Program must be involved in all communication.
- Support for affected parties: Provide support and resources to those affected by the volunteer's actions, such as counseling or additional supervision for youth participants.
 - It is important to treat all involved in the incident with dignity and respect. Because of this, allegations will be taken seriously and result in immediate suspensions. Reinstatement may occur pending a full investigation of the facts and outcomes from relevant outside groups (i.e., the justice system).

- Investigation protocols: Follow proper investigation protocols to ensure fairness and thoroughness in handling the situation.
 - Following the suspension of the volunteer, the Extension agent can work with the grievance committee and district director to discern if the volunteer must be reinstated, put on probation, or dismissed.
- Confidentiality: Maintain confidentiality throughout the process to protect the privacy of all involved parties.
- Legal and organizational compliance: Ensure that all actions comply with legal requirements and the organization's policies and procedures.
- Safety and well-being priority: Prioritize the safety and well-being of youth participants and other volunteers above all else.

Note: Each action must be conducted with professionalism, sensitivity and adherence to organizational policies and procedures.

Confidentiality must be maintained throughout the process. Information regarding a conflict must be given out as sparingly as possible and must not include unnecessary personal details. Complete confidentiality may not be possible due to (1) a need for NDSU to fulfill any applicable legal requirements (subpoenas, etc.) that may arise in the future and (2) the requirement to inform others of suspension or dismissal on a need-to-know basis. Notification of suspension or dismissal may be done in writing or verbally.

4-H Volunteer Improvement Plan Example Letter

disciplinary action or dismissal.

Volunteer Name: [Volunteer Name]		
Date: [Date]		
Prepared By: [Preparer's Name, Title]		
Reason for Review: [Briefly describe the incident(s) leading to the review. Ensure the description and includes relevant details without unnecessary personal information.	•	
 Improvement Plan Objectives: Address and Correct Behavior: Align volunteer's behavior with the Conduct. Provide Support and Resources: Offer coaching, training, mentoring the volunteer in meeting expectations. Monitor Progress: Regularly check in to assess improvements and needed. 	g or position changes to assist	
Tools and strategies for improvement that will be used: List of tools or strategies that will be used, any information around access for frequencies. Tools and strategies may include: • Example–list regular check-in's to monitor progress – describe what	•	
Confidentiality and Documentation: • Maintain confidentiality throughout the process, sharing information: • Ensure all documentation is kept secure and confidential.	າ on a need-to-know basis.	
Signatures:		
Volunteer:	Date:	
• 4-H Representative: Date:		
Witness (if applicable): Date:		
Next Review Date: [Date]		
Notes: • The purpose of this plan is to support the volunteer in meeting the	expectations and standards of	
the 4-H program.		
 Any further incidents or failure to comply with the improvement plan 	n may result in additional	

4-H Volunteer Resolution Plan Example Letter

Volunteer Name: [Volunteer Name]	
Date: [Date]	
Prepared By: [Preparer's Name, Title]	
Reason for Review: [Briefly describe the incident(s) leading to the review. Ensure the description includes relevant details without unnecessary personal information.]	otion is factual and objective and
 Resolution Plan Objectives: Address and Correct Behavior: Align volunteer's behavior with the 4 Provide a Path Forward: Come up with a mutually agreeable plan to volunteer's behavior. Monitor Progress: Regularly check in to assess improvements and 	resolve issues arising from the
 Resolution that will be used: List of tools or strategies that will be used, any information around access frequencies. Tools and strategies may include: Reassignment/position change: Moving the volunteer to a different behavior to ensure a more positive and effective contribution. Referral to a different unit or program: Directing the volunteer to and talents and interests may be a better fit, potentially resolving conflict. Dismissal/retirement: Ending the volunteer's service if it is determined in the best interest of the program, ensuring the overall integral. Confidentiality and Documentation: 	role that better suits their skills and other unit or program where their ts and improving their engagement.
 Maintain confidentiality throughout the process, sharing information Ensure all documentation is kept secure and confidential. 	n on a need-to-know basis.
Signatures: • Volunteer:	
 Notes: The purpose of this plan is to support the volunteer in meeting the 4-H program. Any further incidents or failure to comply with the improvement plan 	

action or dismissal.

Parade Participation Agreement Form

I understand that the University of North Dakota Extension does not provide medical insurance or workers' compensation coverage; all 4-H members, 4-H volunteers, helpers and spectators are encouraged to maintain their own health insurance. Incidents/injuries must be reported to the Safety Office immediately or within 24 hours.

In consideration for being allowed to participate in the parade on behalf of myself, my personal representatives, heirs, next of kin, successors and assigns; unless considered a "state employee" (which means every present or former officer or employee of the state or any person acting on behalf of the state in an official capacity, temporarily or permanently, with or without compensation) I forever:

- a. waive, release and discharge the State of North Dakota, its agencies, officers, and employees from any and all negligence and liability for my death, disability, personal injury, property damages, property theft or claims of any nature which may hereafter accrue to me, and my estate as a direct or indirect result of my participation in the above referenced activity or event.
- b. defend, indemnify and hold harmless the State of North Dakota, its agencies, officers and employees (State) from any claims of any nature, including all costs, expenses and attorney's fees which may in any manner result from or arise out of this agreement.

I hereby consent to receive medical treatment which may be deemed advisable in the event of injury, accident or illness during this activity or event.

All participants under the age of 18 must have their legal guardian sign this document indicating that the youth and adult have read and understood the above expectations and policy requirements.

DATE:

Printed Name:	Signature:

Five-Year Plan of Implementation Form

ame of 4-H Council/Club:				
ate:				
nount of Excess Funds that Must be Spent	t Down or Invested in 4-H	:		
ate for Completion of Disbursement of Exce	ess Funds (must be within	n five years of today's dat	e):	
pecific 4-H Youth Development	Coal from Funds			
pecific 4-A Youth Development	Goal from Funds:			
enefits These Funds/This Proi	ect will Provide fo	r 4-H Youth:		
enefits These Funds/This Proj	ect will Provide fo	r 4-H Youth:		
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		r 4-H Youth:		
Senefits These Funds/This Proj	als:	r 4-H Youth:	Signature to sign off	
			Signature to sign off step was completed	
pecific Steps to Accomplish Goa	als:			
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pecific Steps to Accomplish Goa	als:			

Date

NDSU Extension Agent, 4-H Contact (signature and printed name)

Record Retention

Youth development programming is required to compile many types of records annually. Some records must be retained longer, and other records must be shredded annually due to identity theft-related concerns. Ultimately, the NDSU Extension agent is in charge of record retention and may delegate this task to 4-H Youth Development Program staff. The following chart is to help with record maintenance. There are two suggested methods for record retention:

- Secure Record Storage is out of the reach of the general public and access to the file(s) are monitored by staff. This pertains to electronic storage of files as well.
- Locked Record Storage are files that are kept in a locked file cabinet or other locked storage unit that has limited access. In an electronically locked record storage format, files are password protected.

NOTE: If a paper record is converted to an electronic version (scanned into a PDF), the electronic version becomes the official record. The paper copy becomes the convenience copy.

Record Type	Retention Type	Record Storage		
4-H Club Records (NDSU RCN 800345)				
Bylaws and Constitutions	Permanent (records destroyed 3 years after club disbands); Recommend to update every 3 years, minimum	Secure storage		
Meeting Minutes	3 years (permanent recommended)	Secure storage		
Outreach Methods Documentation Form and Documentation of Outreach Efforts	3 years, then shred/delete	Secure storage		
Award or Scholarship Applications	3 years, then shred/delete	Secure storage		
Permission Forms	3 years, then shred/delete	Secure storage		
Enrollment				
North Dakota 4-H Code of Conduct	5 years, then shred/delete	Secure storage		
Waiver of Liability Form	5 years, then shred/delete	Secure storage		
Photo & Information Release	5 years, then shred/delete	Secure storage		
Liability Release and Authorization Forms	5 years, then shred/delete	Secure storage		
Youth Protection Policy Forms	5 years after their last active enrollment (re-signed annually as volunteers and youth enroll), then shred/delete	Secure storage		
Volunteer Applications	3 years (re-signed annually as volunteers and youth enroll), then shred/delete	Secure storage		
Miscellaneous Records Not Covered by Another Record Series	3 years, then shred/delete	Secure storage		
Adult Self-Disclosure	1 year (current year), then shred/delete	Secure storage		
Youth Treatment Authorization Form & Health History Information	1 year (current year), then shred/delete	Secure storage		
Organized Camp Records • Youth Treatment Authorization Form and Health History Information • Medical Log	Until the youth turns 21	Secure storage		
Other 4-H Adult Volunteer Records				
Volunteer letters (invitation letters to volunteer, acceptance/denial letter, etc.)	3 years, then shred/delete	Secure storage		
Record of 4-H Adult Volunteer Orientation	1 year after volunteer services/ appointment end date, then shred/delete	Secure storage		
Complaints/Concerns	3 years, then shred/delete	Secure storage		
Applications for those denied a volunteer position	3 years, then shred/delete	Secure storage		

Record Type	Retention Type	Record Storage	
4-H Club Membership, Leadership and Award Records	(NDSU RCN 800343)		
4-H club membership lists	Permanent	Secure Storage	
4-H club leader lists	Permanent	Secure Storage	
4-H club or county award or scholarship lists	Permanent	Secure Storage	
4-H club charter records	Permanent	Secure Storage	
4-H Club Financial Records (NDSU RCN 011011)			
Annual Financial Reports	10 years, then shred/delete	Secure storage	
Annual Budgets, including fundraising approval forms	10 years, then shred/delete	Secure storage	
Annual Audit and/or Peer Review Reports	10 years, then shred/delete	Secure storage	
Annual Inventory Reports and/or Treasurer's Report	10 years, then shred/delete	Secure storage	
Bank statements	10 years, then shred/delete	Secure storage	
Monthly bank statement verification forms	10 years, then shred/delete	Secure storage	
EIN, bank accounts and signers lists	Permanent	Locked storage	
4-H Council Records (NDSU RCN 220401)			
4-H council meeting minutes and committee records	10 years, then shred/delete	Secure storage	
4-H Awards and Annual Statistics (NDSU RCN 00344)			
4-H award recipients for county-based awards (generally name only but may include biography)	10 years, then shred/delete	Secure storage	
4-H council annual statistics	10 years, then shred/delete	Secure storage	
4-H County Fair/Achievement Day Records, GENERAL	. (NDSU RCN 800342)		
Letters to judges, schedules, fair booth scorecards, brochures, meeting minutes	3 years, then shred/delete	Secure storage	
Other records from county fair or 4-H Achievement Days	3 years, then shred/delete	Secure storage	
County Fair/4-H Achievement Day Records, HISTORIC	(NDSU RCN 800337)		
Number of exhibits, special awards, recognitions	3 years, then archive	Secure storage	
Photos and related records that may have historical significance	3 years, then archive	Secure storage	
Affirmative Action			
Expansion & Review Committee records (roster, agenda, minutes, Positive Action Plan, etc.)	3 years, then shred/delete	Secure storage	
4-H ADA Accommodation Request	3 years, then shred/delete	Secure storage	
Outreach records (forms, press releases, posters, flyers, calendar notes, announcements, personal letters, newsletters, etc.)	3 years, then shred/delete	Secure storage	
Assurance of Nondiscrimination Letter	3 years, then shred/delete	Secure storage	
Other Miscellaneous Records			
Committee applications	3 years, then shred/delete	Secure storage	
Sign-in sheets (e.g., meetings, trainings)	3 years, then shred/delete	Secure storage	
Event registration lists	3 years, then shred/delete	Secure storage	
Horse & Livestock lease agreements	1 year after end date lease agreement end date, then shred/delete	Secure storage	

4-H Accommodation Request Form

Name	of 4-H Member	Requesting Accommodation	ons:
Role:	☐ 4-H Youth	☐ 4-H Adult Volunteer	□ Other
Count	y:	4-H C	ilub:
Events	s or Activities Be	ing Attended (Include Date	es):
volun used a experi	teers, judges, ar as necessary in ience possible.	nd others as needed. I un assisting 4-H staff and vo	he information on this form with Extension staff, 4-H derstand that this information will only be shared and olunteers in helping this 4-Her have the best 4-H
Reque	est Submitted by	(Please Print):	
Phone	:	Email:	
Relation	onship to 4-H Me	ember/Volunteer/Other:	
			uccessful at a 4-H program or event, please contact your do our best to provide all requested accommodations.
Please		•	o know ful for 4-H Volunteers, Staff or Judges to be aware of
Accoi	mmodations red	quested	

Please attach additional accommodation details, if needed

North Dakota 4-H Policy Updated: August 11, 2025



How to File 4-H Council/Club Taxes and Financial Records to Remain in Good Standing

All 4-H Councils, as well as 4-H Clubs not housed under a Council and operating independently, must complete annual tax and financial reporting by September 15 of the current year to remain in active status.

📌 Annual Requirements:

- 1. Submit financial report with receipts to your local NDSU Extension office. Two options:
 - 1. Upload to your 4-H Online Club Profile
 - 2. Submit a paper form to the Extension agent

The Extension agent should communicate their preferred method.

- 2. File the appropriate IRS Form 990.
- 3. File all 1099s with IRS & recipients by January 31
- 4. Complete North Dakota state reporting requirements.

ND 4-H Youth Development Google Drive Folder:

Access Here

✓ Step-by-Step Filing Instructions

Step 1: Club Charter and EIN - Compliance is Not Optional

- All 4-H Clubs must submit the PB430 Charter Application and be officially Chartered through North Dakota 4-H.
- Once Chartered, a club does not have to re-charter. To remain in good standing and keep your charter, annual financial and reporting requirements must be *met*.
- **EIN Requirements Two Options:**
 - Option one: In most cases, clubs should use their 4-H Council's Employer Identification Number (EIN). This is the preferred and simplest approach.
 - o Option two: If a club will raise more than \$10,000 annually and this causes the 4-H Council's total gross income (including all clubs using its EIN) to exceed \$50,000, the club **may choose** to obtain its own EIN.
 - If the 4-H Council already applied for the 1023-EZ, they will not be required to reapply with the IRS using the full Form 1023 (making over







1

\$50,000), since they already have their tax-exempt letter of determination. They will need to file a different 990 Form.

Important:

If a club operates under its own EIN, it assumes full legal responsibility for complying with IRS and Secretary of State series returns—**regardless of how much money is raised.** This includes submitting federal Form 990 filings and state annual reports. Keep in mind that choosing this path increases the administrative burden on both the club and the overall 4-H program.

Even if clubs use the Council EIN, each club is still **required** to submit an annual end-of-year financial statement to its local NDSU Extension Office. This ensures accurate reporting and helps maintain the program's nonprofit compliance at both the state and federal level. This also helps the Extension agent and 4-H Council support clubs in setting goals for the next year.

Noncompliance may jeopardize your club's standing with North Dakota 4-H and the IRS. Filing and financial transparency are essential.

Q Check EIN status if you already have one:

- IRS Search for tax-exempt status: <u>IRS EO Select Check</u>
- If EIN is missing or misplaced:
 - o Check with your bank to see if they have it on record
 - o Call the IRS EO Department at 1-877-829-5500
 - Request an IRS 147C letter EIN Verification Letter if original CP 575 letter has been lost. IRS will mail or fax letter.
 - Make sure the person calling the IRS is listed as an authorized contact. If not, you may need to submit a Form 8821 Tax Information Authorization form first – see step-by-step instructions below.
 - Apply for a new EIN using the instructions in the "Obtaining an EIN" handout in the ND 4-H Google Drive under:

4-H Club Folder > Club Management > Taxes Folder > 4-H EIN Instructions

• New Clubs: Open bank accounts under the Council's EIN. This allows the Council to file taxes on your behalf. If your club has its own EIN because you are raising over \$10,000 annually, you are then responsible for filing all required tax forms.

Note: Bank account login information must use a general username and password—**not** personal credentials (e.g., zoeisgreat1224). This information should be accessible to others if needed and must be shared with the Extension agent.

Step 2: Apply for Tax-Exempt Status

Before applying, your club must determine whether to operate under the 4-H Council's EIN or obtain its own.

☑ Step 1: Ask These Key Questions







EXTENSION

2

Use the prompts below to guide the decision:

- 1. What EIN should the club use?
 - o Will the club raise more than \$10,000 annually?
 - No \rightarrow Use the 4-H Council's EIN. Easier process.
 - \rightarrow Club must still submit annual financials to the Council yearly.
 - Yes \rightarrow Continue below.
- 2. What is the 4-H Council's total gross income (including all clubs using its EIN)?
 - o Less than \$50,000?
 - Your club can still use the Council's EIN.
 - → Just ensure combined income won't tip it over the \$50,000 threshold.
 - More than \$50,000 or expected to exceed soon?
 - Your club should apply for its own EIN and tax-exempt status. → Otherwise, the Council will be required to file the full Form 1023 with the IRS.
 - ✓ Step 2: If Your Club Needs Its Own Tax-Exempt Status
- Go to pay.gov to file the correct form:
 - o Form 1023-EZ
 - Use if your club expects to raise less than \$50,000 annually
 - \$275 one-time application fee
 - Form 1023
 - Required if your club expects to raise more than \$50,000 annually
 - **\$600** one-time application fee
- View your club's status later using the IRS Tax-Exempt Entity Search.

Helpful Resources

- A visual 4-H Program Financial Example is included on the last page.
- Example Form 1023-EZ See the "ND 4-H Tax & Financial Records Handouts" (starts on page 13) in the Tax Folder on our 4-H Google Drive for document examples and required attachments.
 - o **ND 4-**H Google Drive > 4-H Clubs Folder > Club Management Folder > <u>Taxes</u> Folder

Step 3: Merge EIN Under the 4-H Council (if applicable)

If your 4-H club will operate under the 4-H Council's EIN instead of obtaining its own, the following steps are required:







3

- Hold a club meeting to vote on merging financial reporting under the 4-H Council's EIN.
- Record the decision in the club's official meeting minutes using the example provided in "Example Wording for Meeting Minutes - EIN Alignment" at the end of this document.
- Notify the 4-H Council of the club's decision.
- The Council must hold a meeting to approve and record this merger in its own minutes using the sample provided.
- Provide minutes from both the club and the council to update the bank account records for each club to reflect the Council's EIN.
- Submit copies of both sets of minutes (Club and Council) to your local Extension office for recordkeeping.

NOTE: All clubs should use the 4-H Council's EIN unless the local Extension agent has determined that each club will independently file and prepare their own required tax documents each year. Merging with the 4-H Council significantly reduces the risk of filing errors and eases the overall effort to maintain compliance at both the federal and state levels. An exception is when a club raises significant funds that would push the 4-H Council's total gross income above \$50,000, potentially requiring the Council to file a more complex tax return.

Do all 4-H Clubs and the 4-H Council have to be at the same bank?

They do not. Just like you can open an account at multiple banks with the same SSN, you can also open multiple accounts at different banks with the same EIN.

Guidance on EIN Transition and Bank Accounts

Some banks may not allow a 4-H Club to simply switch the EIN associated with an existing account. Instead, they may require the account to be closed and a new one opened under the new EIN (such as the 4-H Council's EIN, if consolidating).

Please note: An EIN cannot be dissolved or canceled. According to the IRS, once an EIN is assigned, it remains permanently associated with that entity—even if the entity later closes or changes its structure. You can refer to this IRS guidance for more information:

Recommended Steps If a Bank Will Not Transition With Same Account:

- Close the current bank account associated with the club's individual EIN (after finalizing any outstanding transactions).
- **Open a new account** under the 4-H Council EIN.
- **Document the transition** by keeping a record of the final balance, closing date, and transfer of funds for audit and reporting purposes.

Step 4: Submit Financial Records







4

All entities with an EIN must file with both the IRS and the Secretary of State (SOS). When 4-H clubs operate under a 4-H Council's EIN, the Council is responsible for filing a combined report that includes both its own finances and those of all affiliated 4-H clubs. To ensure accurate reporting, each club using the Council's EIN must submit its year-end financial report to the Council.

Clubs that maintain their own EIN are required to file their own federal and state tax documents. In addition, both stand-alone clubs and 4-H Councils must submit their complete financial reports to the local Extension office each year to remain in good standing.

- Use the North Dakota 4-H Treasurer's Record Book (in the Taxes folder of the Google Drive) to track income and expenses.
- Complete the North Dakota 4-H Annual Financial Statement with:
 - Updated address and contact info
 - o Treasurer's name and preparer's signatures
- Submit any receipts and documentation with the financial statement to ensure all records are complete in case of an audit.
- Submit all materials to your Extension agent. The Extension office will upload and store these electronically in 4-H Online, allowing the state office access if needed for transparency and accountability.
- Due September 15.

🖈 If a 4-H Club is operating under a single umbrella EIN with the 4-H Council, each 4-H Club is still required to complete and upload its own Annual Financial Summary Report into 4-H Online. This ensures transparency and accurate recordkeeping at the club level.

Once clubs have completed and uploaded their individual reports, the 4-H Council Treasurer will collect these to ensure that all financial activity across the county is included when preparing federal and state tax filings. This process also ensures that in the event of an audit, each club's documentation is on file and easy to reference.

Think of it as a two-step process:

- 1. Each 4-H Club uploads their own financial report into 4-H Online for the program
- 2. The 4-H Council aggregates these reports to complete and submit the required IRS/state filings under the umbrella EIN.

Step 5: File IRS Form 990 Series Return

All 4-H entities with an EIN are federally required to file an IRS Form 990 annually, regardless of income.







5

☑ If your 4-H Club is rolled up under your County 4-H Council's EIN:

You do **not** need to file a separate 990, as the Council is responsible for filing on behalf of all clubs under its EIN.

Find the finding of the key advantages of having all 4-H entities in the county operate under your 4-H Council's single EIN—only one 990 needs to be filed at both the federal and state level, which reduces complexity and ensures compliance.

▲ If your 4-H Club has its own separate EIN:

You **must** file a 990 independently. Most clubs qualify to file **Form 990-N (e-Postcard)** if gross receipts are \$50,000 or less.

File at: irs.gov/charities-non-profits/annual-electronic-filing-requirement

Due September 15

Different 990 Forms

- $990-N Gross receipts \le $50,000$
- 990-EZ Gross receipts > \$50,000 but < \$200,000
- Full 990 Gross receipts \geq \$200,000 (or total assets \geq \$500,000, even if receipts are below \$200,000)

To File IRS Form 990-N, You'll Need:

- EIN (Employer Identification Number)
- Legal and mailing address of the club
- Any other names used by the club (if applicable)
- Treasurer's name and address (Principal Officer)
- Confirmation that gross receipts are \$50,000 or less
- Website (if applicable)
- Statement of termination (only if the 4-H club is dissolving)

See an example on page 7 of the "ND 4-H Tax & Financial Handouts" (Google Drive > 4-H Clubs Folder > Club Management Folder > <u>Taxes > Handouts</u>)

Step 6: File ND State Registration and Annual Report

All entities with an EIN are required to file with both the IRS and the Secretary of State (SOS). If all 4-H clubs operate under the 4-H Council's EIN, the Council is responsible for reporting both its own financial activity and that of the clubs to the IRS and SOS. However, if a club maintains its own EIN, it must independently file both federal and state tax documents.





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EXTENSION

6

Initial Registration with ND SOS:

- Visit: Nonprofit Services
- Select: Register a Nonprofit
- **Choose Unincorporated Entity**
 - o One-time registration: \$25 for charitable organization registration
 - Annual report: \$10
- Due September 15.

Trade Name Registration: \$25 – renew every five years

- Create a FirstStop account: firststop.sos.nd.gov
 - o Record login info and share with Extension agent.
- Register your 4-H Council or Club name under "Trade Name Registration"

Annual Report Filing Instructions:

- 1. Return to the home page and select File Annual Report under Charitable Organizations
- 2. Search your club by name or system ID
- 3. Enter:
 - Annual income and expenses
 - Admin pay: enter \$0 because you are not paying any workers
 - o Purpose: Education and 4-H Youth Development
- 4. Confirm and submit
- 5. Due September 15.

\$60 registration total for your first year establishing with our North Dakota SOS.

- \$25 fee for charitable organization registration
- \$25 fee for trade name initial filing
- \$10 fee for annual filing.

Step 7: 1099 Filing Requirements for 4-H Councils and Clubs

If your 4-H Council or Club pays \$600 or more to an individual or business in a calendar year including multiple payments that add up to or exceed \$600—you are required to issue a 1099-NEC or 1099-MISC form by January 31 of the following year.

When to Use 1099-NEC (Nonemployee Compensation)

A 1099-NEC must be issued if your 4-H Council or Club pays an individual or business \$600 or more for services, including payments made via cash, check, or direct deposit (not PayPal/Venmo/credit card, which are reported separately by those platforms).







7

Common examples:

- Judges
- Coaches or instructors
- Guest speakers, clinicians, or workshop presenters
- Independent contractors (photographers, graphic designers, etc.)
- Gift cards given in exchange for services

Notes:

- Gift cards are treated as cash and are always reportable when tied to services or recognition of work.
- Scholarships do not require a 1099. This includes any grant of scholarship.

When to Use 1099-MISC (Miscellaneous Income)

A 1099-MISC must be issued if your 4-H Council or Club pays \$600 or more to an individual in the form of prizes, awards, or premiums that are not tied to services.

Common examples:

- Competition winnings or contest awards
- Premium payments for fair exhibits or livestock show results
- Door prizes (even if awarded randomly)
- Gift cards awarded as prizes (not in exchange for services)
- Honorariums or recognition gifts not connected to specific tasks

* Note: Even youth who are awarded multiple premiums or prizes throughout the year may need a 1099-MISC if total payments reach or exceed \$600.

Documentation & Protocols

- Always collect a W-9 from the individual or vendor before issuing payment.
- Create a written contract or letter of agreement for service-based payments (judges, speakers, etc.).
- Retain signed contracts and meeting minutes approving payments in your annual financial records.
- Use a simple spreadsheet to track cumulative payments by individual throughout the
- An example contract is included at the end of this document.

✓ Steps to Take if Someone Won't Fill Out a W-9:





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1. Explain Why It's Required

Let them know that providing a W-9 is a standard requirement for compliance with IRS regulations. It's not optional if you're paying them \$600 or more for services in a calendar year.

2. Clarify What the W-9 Is For

Many people are hesitant due to privacy concerns. Reassure them that the W-9 form is only used for reporting income to the IRS, not for anything else. It includes their name, address, and taxpayer identification number (TIN or SSN), which are required by law to issue a 1099.

3. Offer a Secure Way to Submit It

Let them know they can submit the form securely (e.g., in person, encrypted email, secure file upload). This may ease concerns about sharing sensitive information.

4. Let Them Know the Consequences

If they still refuse, you are required by the IRS to:

- o Withhold backup withholding (currently 24%) from their payments, and
- Still issue a 1099-NEC indicating backup withholding was applied.

5. Inform Them That Payment May Be Delayed or Withheld

If the individual still refuses to submit a W-9, kindly let them know that our 4-H organization may be unable to process their payment. Since 4-H is required to follow IRS regulations, payments cannot be issued without the proper tax documentation on file.

★ Suggested Wording to Use:

"To meet IRS requirements, we must have a completed W-9 on file before issuing payment. Without it, we are unable to process your payment through our 4-H program. We truly appreciate your understanding and cooperation with this federal requirement."

☑ Filing Checklist

- 1. Collect W-9 from all individuals or vendors and store under lock and key (*secure location*)
- 2. Determine if payment meets \$600 threshold
- 3. Identify correct form: 1099-NEC (services) or 1099-MISC (prizes/awards)
- 4. Issue form to recipient and file with the IRS by January 31
- 5. Retain a copy for your records

★ Helpful Tip: Keep a folder of all W-9s in a secure location for the year and track payments monthly to avoid scrambling in January. See the <u>Eide Bailly PowerPoint</u> slide 33, located in the tax folder, for filling out the W-9 and 1099 forms.

Lecords | Weeping Financial Records

recepting i manetar receive

- Track income and expenses monthly
- Use the Treasurer's Book to make recordkeeping easier







EXTENSION

9

Consider scheduling an annual "4-H Finance Day" with your Extension agent to assist with filing

💄 Reminders & Notes

- Deadline: September 15 taxes must be filed annually (allows time for August bank statement)
- Clubs must NOT use the EIN of NDSU Extension or the ND 4-H Foundation
- Always update contact info annually (especially if officers change)
 - o Keep these updates in 4-H Online for electronic records.
- If club name changes, send amended articles to IRS Premium sale funds: Clubs or Councils are only responsible for reporting or managing funds they retain or disburse themselves.
 - If the club or council collects and pays out premium sale funds (even as a passthrough), and individual payments are \$600 or more, they must issue a 1099-NEC to the recipient.
 - ^o If an **outside party** (e.g., a fair board, bank, or livestock committee) handles the funds and disbursements, they are responsible for issuing the 1099s.
- Questions? Please reach out to your local NDSU Extension agent for assistance.







10

Letter 147C, Form 8821, 2848, and Form 8822-B

1. Letter 147C - EIN Verification Letter

- What it is: A letter from the IRS confirming the Employer Identification Number (EIN)
 assigned to your organization.
- When to use it:
 - If your club or council needs proof of EIN (e.g., to open a bank account or apply for taxexempt status).
 - o If you lost your EIN confirmation letter.
- See Step-by-step instructions below.

2. Form 8821 - Tax Information Authorization

- What it is: Allows someone (e.g., Extension agent, treasurer, etc.) to receive and access IRS tax records for the 4-H club or council.
- When to use it:
 - To authorize someone to <u>view</u> past filings, resolve notices, or access EIN/tax-exempt status info.
 - o **Does not authorize** the person to make decisions or represent the group.
- See Step-by-step instructions below.

3. Form 2848 – Power of Attorney and Declaration of Representative

- What it is: Grants someone the legal authority to represent the 4-H club or council before the IRS.
- When to use it:
 - If someone needs to speak to the IRS on behalf of the 4-H program, correct filings, or make decisions.
 - Useful when the original representative is no longer involved and authority needs to be re-established (e.g., old treasurer is gone).
- See Step-by-step instructions below.

4. Form 8822-B - Change of Address or Responsible Party (Business)

- What it is: Notifies the IRS when a business or nonprofit with an EIN changes its mailing address, business location, or the identity of its responsible party.
- When to use it:
 - o Any time your 4-H club or council changes its mailing address or physical location.
 - When the responsible party changes (for tax-exempt orgs, this is typically the principal officer). Must be filed within 60 days of the change.







11



What Is Letter 147C?

An EIN Verification Letter 147C is an IRS-issued document that confirms your organization's EIN and legal name. It serves as a replacement for the original CP 575 letter and is accepted when proof of EIN is required.

Who Can Request It

Only the following may request a 147C letter:

- An owner or legal representative of the organization (such as a board officer), or
- An individual with valid **Power of Attorney (Form 2848)** on file with the IRS.

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1. Call the IRS Business & Specialty Tax Line

- Dial 1-800-829-4933 (available Monday through Friday, 7am-7pm local time).
- Press 1 for English, then 1 for EIN, then 3 for EIN but cannot remember it.
- Inform the agent you need a 147C letter because the CP 575 is lost.
- Be prepared for identity verification questions to confirm authorization.

Once verified, the IRS will ask if you can receive the letter by fax or mail.

2. Choose Delivery Method

- Fax (fastest): If accepted, the agent will fax the letter immediately—usually during the
- Mail: If mailed, expect delivery in 4–6 weeks.

Alternative: Written Request by Mail

Although calling is faster, you can also send a written request:

Include:

- Date
- Organization's legal name







12

- EIN (if known)
- Statement requesting a 147C EIN Verification Letter

Mail to the appropriate IRS address:

For organizations in North Dakota (and most western or non-US locations), send to:

Internal Revenue Service

Mail Stop 6273 1973 N Rulon White Blvd. Ogden, UT 84404

Processing typically takes 4–6 weeks.

i Tips & Best Practices

- Have a secure fax or e-fax available when calling—they will ask.
- Err on the side of calling early or later in the week to avoid busy hold times.LLC University®+11LLC University®+11Shiftbase+11Delaware Inc.+1Plane+1
- Always **keep a copy** of the letter once received.
- Use it for bank setup, vendor verification, or to support Form 2848 or Form 8821 submissions.

✓ Step-by-Step: How to Submit IRS Form 8821

What is IRS Form 8821?

Form 8821, Tax Information Authorization, allows a designated individual or organization to receive and access your confidential tax information from the IRS. It does not authorize them to act on your behalf or make decisions—only to view and receive information for the tax matters and years you specify.

1. Complete the Form

- Download Form 8821 from the IRS website: IRS Form 8821 PDF
- Fill it out with the taxpayer's information and designate the individual or organization authorized to receive tax information. (i.e., NDSU Extension Cass County 4-H Extension Agent or current 4-H Council Treasurer)
- Be clear about the type of tax and tax years or periods you're authorizing access for (e.g., Form 990 for tax years 2022–2024).
- Sign and date the form. Only the taxpayer (not the designee) can sign it.

2. Submit the Form to the IRS

You have three options:







13

A. Mail

Send the form to the IRS address for western states:

Internal Revenue Service 1973 Rulon White Blvd., MS 6737 Ogden, UT 84201

B. Fax

You can fax Form 8821 to the IRS Centralized Authorization File (CAF) Unit. The correct fax number depends on where the taxpayer lives. From the instructions:

Ogden, UT fax: 855-214-7522 (most states west of the Mississippi)

C. Submit Online (for Tax Professionals)

If you are using a tax professional with access to the IRS e-Services portal, they can submit authorizations electronically through the Tax Pro Account or Online Account.

📌 Tips:

- Keep a copy for your records.
- Upload a copy to 4-H Online to have it stored electronically.
- It can take 5–15 business days to process.
- This form does not authorize representation (like Form 2848). It only allows the designee to receive tax information.

▶ Using Form 2848 to Reestablish Authority for a 4-H Club or Council

📌 When to Use Form 2848:

Use Form 2848 when your 4-H Council or Club:

- Has an existing **EIN**, but the original signer/organizer is no longer active or reachable.
- Needs someone new (e.g., Extension agent, council officer, or fiscal manager) to communicate with the IRS on behalf of the organization.
- Is trying to resolve an IRS issue (e.g., back filings, penalties, or EIN verification).
- Needs to request tax records or correct prior filings and can't proceed without representation.





14

✓ Step-by-Step Guide for Form 2848

Step 1: Identify the New Authorized Representative

- This must be someone qualified to represent the organization before the IRS:
 - o Attorney, CPA, Approved 4-H Volunteer, or
 - o An Extension agent if acting in an official capacity for the organization
 - o IRS will need supporting documentation like bylaws, minutes, etc. see example minutes below.

Step 2: Gather Organization Information

- Legal name of the 4-H Club or Council (as registered with the IRS)
- EIN (Employer Identification Number)
- Mailing address
- Tax form and years in question (e.g., Form 990-N, 2024-2025)

Step 3: Complete Form 2848

You can find the form here: IRS Form 2848 PDF

Key Fields:

- **Line 1:** Enter the 4-H Club or Council's name, EIN, and address.
- Line 2: Enter the new representative's name, address, CAF number (if they have one), phone, and professional credentials (Approved 4-H Volunteer: treasurer, president, etc.)
- Line 3: List the tax matters (e.g., "Form 990-N, years 2024 through 2025").
- **Line 4:** Not needed unless limiting authority.
- Part II Signature:
 - o Signatures in part I line 7 are for the officers of the Organization. Part II is for the representative included in line 2.
 - Must be signed by an officer of the organization with legal authority (e.g., current Council president or treasurer).
 - Include title and date.

📍 If you're unsure who currently has legal authority, you may need to first update records with the IRS using a letter and 147C EIN request.

Step 4: Submit the Form

Fax to Ogden, UT CAF Unit for North Dakota: **855-214-7522**







15

Or Mail to: **Internal Revenue Service** 1973 Rulon White Blvd., MS 6737 Ogden, UT 84201

Step 5: Keep a Copy & Track the Status

- Keep a copy in your 4-H Council or Club's records.
- It can take 5–15 business days for the IRS to process.
- Once processed, the new representative will be able to:
 - o Call the IRS on behalf of the group.
 - o Request transcripts, resolve issues, or complete missing filings.

X Tips for Success

- Attach meeting minutes or documentation showing the current board/officers and their roles if you think the IRS may question the authority.
- If no one has current authority with the IRS, consider calling the IRS Business Line (800-829-4933) to verify what's on file and if a Form 8821 + supporting docs would be an easier first step.

Form 8822-B – Change of Address or Responsible Party (Business) ✓ Step-by-Step Guide for Form 8822-B

- 1. Download Form 8822-B from the IRS website.
- 2. Check the appropriate box at the top ("Change of Address" or "Change of Responsible Party").
- 3. Complete lines 1–4 with the organization's current and new information.
- 4. For a responsible party change, provide the new party's name, SSN/ITIN/EIN, and title.
- 5. The current responsible party or an officer must sign and date the form.
- 6. Mail to the IRS address listed in the instructions.
- 7. Keep a copy in your permanent 4-H records.







16

Example Wording for Meeting Minutes – EIN Alignment

When a 4-H Club transitions to merge and operate under the 4-H Council's EIN for financial reporting purposes, both the Club and the Council are required to record the decision in their respective official meeting minutes. This documentation may be required by banks, auditors, or NDSU when updating account information.

Example: 4-H Club Meeting Minutes – Request to Align with Council EIN

Meeting Minutes - [Club Name] 4-H Club

Date: [Insert Date]

A motion was made by [Club Member Name] and seconded by [Club Member Name] to merge the club's financial reporting and tax filings to operate under the EIN of the [County Name] 4-H Council. This will allow the Council to file a single Form 990-N on behalf of the club annually.

The motion passed unanimously.

The club will retain its current bank account but will update its account records to reflect the Council's EIN. All required financial reports and year-end documentation will be submitted to the Council in accordance with North Dakota 4-H financial policy, the IRS and the Secretary of State.

Signed:

[Club Secretary Name]

Attested by:

[Extension Agent Name], Ex Officio - Extension Agent

Example: 4-H Council Meeting Minutes – Acceptance of EIN Alignment

Meeting Minutes - [County Name] 4-H Council

Date: [Insert Date]

A motion was made by [Council Member Name] and seconded by [Council Member Name] to approve the [Club Name | or you can list multiple clubs] 4-H Club's request to merge its financial reporting and operate under the Council's EIN. The Council agrees to include the club [or clubs] in its annual IRS Form 990-N filing and provide oversight in accordance with North Dakota 4-H financial policy, the IRS and the Secretary of State.

The motion passed unanimously.

The Council will ensure all necessary financial records, including those of the [Club Name] 4-H Club, are included in annual reporting and that proper documentation is submitted and retained for audit purposes.

Signed:

[Council Secretary Name]

Attested by:

[Extension Agent Name], Ex Officio – Extension Agent







NDSU EXTENSION

17



Example Meeting Minutes for Authorizing IRS Representation (Form 2848)

[Name of 4-H Club or Council]

Meeting Minutes

Date: [Insert Meeting Date]

Location: [Insert Location or "Via Zoom"]

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at [Insert Time] by [Insert Name and Title].

Roll Call:

Members present:

[List full names and roles – e.g., Jane Doe, President; John Smith, Treasurer; etc.]

Agenda Item: IRS Authorization (Form 2848)

[Chair/President Name] explained that the organization needs to designate a new representative to communicate with the IRS due to changes in leadership. The previous signer is no longer active, and updated authorization is needed to access or resolve tax-related matters, including the organization's EIN and Form 990-N filings.

A motion was made by [Member Name] and seconded by [Member Name] to approve the submission of IRS Form 2848, naming [Insert Full Name and Title of Representative - e.g., Jane Doe, Treasurer or [Agent Name], NDSU Extension Agent] as the authorized representative for the [Club/Council Name].

This authorization will allow them to:

- Communicate with the IRS on behalf of the organization,
- Access past tax records,
- Submit necessary documents, and
- Resolve any issues related to the organization's federal tax status.

The motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment:

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at [Insert Time].

Signatures:

[Secretary Name], Secretary

[Extension Agent Name], Ex Officio – Extension Agent (if applicable)

Notes: You can attach these minutes as supporting documentation when submitting Form 2848 to show that the representative has been authorized by the organization. If the representative is not an officer (e.g., an Extension agent), this documentation is especially important.







18

CONTRACT FOR SERVICES

This agreement is made on	(date) between:
Client (4-H Council/Club):	
Name:	
Address:	-
Email:	
Phone:	
and	
Contractor:	
Name:	_
Address:	
Email:	_
Phone:	
Phone: SSN or Tax ID:	
The Contractor agrees to do the following we	ork:
("Services")	
The work will be done between	and
2. Payment	
The Client will pay the Contractor \$[check, cash, direct deposit, etc.] when the w	for the Services. Payment will be made by york is done or by this schedule:
The Contractor agrees to complete and return	n a W-9 form before payment.







19

3. Independent Contractor
The Contractor is not an employee of the Client. They are responsible for their own taxes (federal, state, etc.).
4 1099 Form

Because the total payment will be over \$600, the Client will send the Contractor a 1099-NEC form for tax reporting purposes at the end of the year.

5. Ending the Agreement

Either side can end this agreement at any time in writing. The Contractor will be paid for any work completed up to that point.

Signatures	
Client Signature:	
Name:	
Date:	_
Contractor Signature:	
Name:	
Date:	







20



EXAMPLE - North Dakota 4-H County Program Financial Profile

EIN's are fake and used for the sole purpose of training

Fotal Dollars:

4-H Club

\$1,200 \$2,000 \$2,345 \$7,523

STEM

몽

LΒ

County 4-H Council

Bank Account at First International Bank & Trust: \$21,563 IRS Status: Approved under 501(c)(3) via Form 1023-EZ 1023-EZ IRS Determination Letter Date: Nov 23, 2023 Contributions are tax-deductible EIN 12-3456789

Bison Bound 4-H Club	(uses Council's EIN: 12-3456789)	Club Account at Gate City Bank:	\$1,200
8	(nses (Club A	

(uses Council's EIN: **12-3456789**) Club Account at Bremer Bank: **Trailblazers 4-H Club**

(uses Council's EIN: 12-3456789)

Bison Roots 4-H Club

Club Account at Bell Bank:

\$320

\$7,523

LopeOn 4-H Club

(uses Council's EIN: **12-3456789**) Club Account at Gate City Bank: \$4,256

(uses Council's EIN: 12-3456789) Club Account at Bremer Bank:

Beyond the Herd 4-H Club

(uses Council's EIN: **12-3456789**) Club Account at Bremer Bank: STEM Explorers 4-H Club Land & Range Judgers 4-H Club (uses Council's EIN: 12-3456789) Club Account at Bremer Bank:

\$2,345

Club Account at First International Bank & Trust: (uses Council's EIN: 12-3456789)

Council + Club \$ \$48,698 Shooting Sports \$16,567 **FOTAL 4-H Program \$** 4-H Council \$: Fotal Club \$ Thundar 4-H Club

\$21,563

\$27,135

\$4,256

Lope

\$230

\$9,231 \$350

Fhundar

(Obtain own EIN: 14-3459111) Club Account at Bell Bank: Shooting Sports 4-H Club

\$65,265

the \$50,000 annual gross receipts limit allowed under the 1023-EZ Because this club's income would cause the 4-H Council to exceed independent tax-exempt status by submitting IRS Form 1023-EZ. group exemption, the club may apply for its own EIN and

✓ Statement for Clarity:

institutions. For example, one club might use Gate City Bank while another uses Choice Bank or Starion Bank—all reporting under the Council's EIN and submitting required financial records to the Council for year-end tax filing. Even though all clubs fall under the same 4-H Council EIN, they may open bank accounts at different financial

All financial institutions used must be FDIC-insured banks or NCUA-insured credit unions to ensure the safety of public funds and compliance with North Dakota 4-H financial policies. Clubs are still required to submit year-end financial records to the Council and follow all 4-H financial reporting procedures.







North Dakota 4-H Ambassador Program

North Dakota 4-H Ambassador program is a leadership program for young people ages 16-22. Ambassadors grow leadership skills, assist in planning statewide 4-H events such as 4-H Extension Youth Conference and retreats. promote 4-H across the state, help at the North Dakota State Fair, help at state or county 4-H events and improve the 4-H youth program through promoting leadership.

Applications and election events are held twice a year. The application will be judged by a panel of judges as well as your performance during a formal and informal interview, formal speech, problem-solving and teambuilding events.

Elections are held the third week in June during the Extension Youth Conference in Fargo. You must attend the entire youth conference.

Applications are due by May 15 in the North Dakota 4-H Center for Youth Development office.

Selections are held the Saturday before Thanksgiving at the North Dakota 4-H Camp in Washburn, North Dakota. You must attend all of the events during that day.

Applications are due Oct. 15 in the North Dakota 4-H Center for Youth Development office.

See details on the application here: Ambassador Resources.



County Ambassadors

4-H is a community of young people across America learning life, leadership and citizenship skills. The responsibilities and activities associated with being involved as a 4-H county ambassador teach all three skills in a variety of ways and provide older members with an outlet for using their skills. Research has shown that highquality youth programs, those proven most effective and rated highly by young people, make an intentional effort to engage youth at the highest level in planning, making choices and refl ecting on their learning (Zeldin, Larson, Camino and O'Connor, 2005). Attention to making youth programs fun, interesting, welcoming and encouraging to young people in our 4-H youth development programs is crucial to their continued vitality. The "Big 3" program characteristics that infl uence positive youth development and encourage community contributions are:

- · Youth leadership development
- Sustained youth-adult partnerships
- Skill-building activities (Roth and Brooks-Gunn, 2003)

Involvement in 4-H programs provides experiences in all three of these areas. Ensuring the Big 3 are present in your 4-H programming efforts attract youth and keep them engaged in 4-H programming long term (Lerner, 2013). Being part of a North Dakota 4-H county ambassadors program provides an excellent opportunity for leadership development. These members have the opportunity to represent their 4-H clubs, share the knowledge they have gained through their 4-H experience with a wider audience and bring new skills they have gained back to their 4-H clubs. The program acknowledges the leadership qualities and potential that each person possesses. In addition to the regular 4-H projects and activities, the county ambassadors will participate in county events, develop action plans and engage in service learning. A county ambassadors program provides older youth something to strive for and keeps them involved in 4-H. In turn, younger members are provided with role models to relate to and emulate. Finally, working as an ambassador group with adult leaders and community mentors provides highquality youth-adult partnership experiences.

See the full County Ambassador handbook for more information. It will provide a basic guideline and examples of how the 4-H county ambassadors program can provide a leadership program that is unique to 4-H youth development. The purpose of this guide is to provide an outline and suggestions for creating and maintaining a 4-H county ambassador program, as well as to provide resources for advisers and youth members. This guide can be modified and adapted to fit the needs of each county.



Using the Danish System to cultivate youth who THRIVE!

Empower Youth to THRIVE!

"To Make the Best Better," our well-known 4-H motto, implies that we need to know what our best is before we can make it better. Our motto asks how well we're doing now, and encourages us to consider how and where we can improve.

A 4-H project is not an end in itself and does not illustrate all the learning that takes place before and after the project is complete; it displays a portion of what the 4-H member is capable of doing and shows what they have accomplished and created.

The TOTAL development of the 4-H member is the most important. Creating, sharing, exhibiting and judging can help 4-H'ers develop various life skills in positive and healthy ways. These 4-H projects help young people gain technical and soft skills as they move through each project, contributing to academic and vocational success.

What is the Danish System?

In 4-H, we target the learning process as a way to help young people build essential life skills to thrive. The Danish system is a method to evaluate a participant's project relative to the standards developed for that class or contest. This system is not used to evaluate participants against other participants or other items. The Danish system highlights areas of success and topics that may need improvement to encourage youth to challenge themselves, set goals and receive constructive criticism. The participant's hard work is recognized as each participant learns to improve their skills "to make the best better." While no evaluation system is perfect, the Danish system helps 4-H develop top quality youth instead of focusing on blue ribbon projects.

4-H is Positive Youth Development

Research shows that participation in high quality 4-H programs increases thriving in youth, and thriving youth achieve important developmental outcomes, such as academic motivation and important skills needed to enter the workforce.



BLUE - Excellent. The exhibitor meets the standard developed. This does not indicate perfection; rather, it rewards average or above average work. Minor faults are corrected immediately when possible.

Potential THRIVE message:

- Challenge your 4-H'er by asking what steps they might change to build on this project to foster the growth
- Empower youth voice. Identify their unique gifts and talents and help them identify how they could help someone else with the skills they used or this project.



RED – **Good**. The exhibitor didn't meet all of the standards developed but is making great progress. Major and minor faults occurred.

Potential THRIVE message:

- Teach the importance of growth mindset. Through effort and hard work, help your 4-H'er set goals to get better. What can they try differently?
- Self-Regulation, or the ability to make choices with a goal in mind, is a key skill for goal setting and ultimately perseverance or "grit."



WHITE - Fair. Participant did their best, but many improvements are needed to meet the pre-established standards. Several major, minor and severe faults occurred. This includes disqualification.

Potential THRIVE message:

- Teach youth to manage emotions effectively and positively. Express the great learning opportunities that come with receiving a white ribbon.
- When youth reach roadblocks to their goals, encourage them to reflect on what didn't work and help them develop new strategies for achieving the
- Reward your 4-H'er for taking a healthy risk simply in participating.
- Help 4-H'ers develop reappraisal skills by pointing out other sides to the situation and encourage perspective talking.

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NDSU

EXTENSION

= Contribution to others through building

relationships and civic engagement

The 4-H Thriving Model | https://helping-youth-thrive.extension.org/



= Happiness, encouragement, and well-being

Prescription Medicine Log

Instructions: This sheet is for reproduction as needed. Record individually each camper's prescription and over-the-counter medication brought to camp with the name of the medicine, dosage, route, and dosage times. Staff should administer the medicine and track using the provided chart.

آ ق	Camper Name									
—	Medicine Name			Dosage		Route (circle one)	Oral Shot	Topical Rectal	Inhalation Other:	
	Time Given	Daily AM	۵	Daily PM	Before Meal	After Meal	2x Daily		3x Daily	4x Daily
	(circle applicable)	As Needed	Br	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Bedtime	Othe		
•			Time	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Medicine # 1 Log	l Log								
	Instructions: Please write the time medicine was aiven (indicate	rrite the time								
	AM/PM) and initial under the day	nder the day								
	Modicibo M			9000		Osciologic) Othor	Oral	Topical	Inhalation	
1	ואופתורווופ ואמווופ			DOSage		אסמיב (כווכופ טוופ)	, Shot	Rectal	Other:	
	Time Given	Daily AM	۵	Daily PM	Before Meal	After Meal	2x Daily		3x Daily	4x Daily
,	(circle applicable)	As Needed	Br	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Bedtime	ne Other:		
			Time	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Medicine # 2 Log	, Log								
	Instructions: Please write the time medicine was aiven (indicate	rite the time								
	AM/PM) and initial under the day aiven.	nder the day								
	, n									

Medicine Name Dosage Route (circle one) Oral Oral Oral Oral Oral Oral Oral Oral	(
#3 Log # 3 Log # 4 Log # 7 Log	m	Medicine Name			Oosage		Route (circle one		Topical	Inhalation	
Daily PM Before Meal After Meal 2x Daily 3x Daily 4 As Needed Breakfast Lunch Dinner Bedtime Other: Daily PM Before Meal After Meal 2x Daily 4 As Needed Breakfast Lunch Dinner Bedtime Other: Condensed and the time Sunday Monday Tuesday Tuesday Tuesday Thursday Friday As Needed Breakfast Lunch Dinner Bedtime Other: Condensed and the time Sunday Monday Tuesday Thursday Thursday Friday As Needed Breakfast Lunch Dinner Bedtime Other: Condensed and the time Sunday Monday Tuesday Thursday Thursday Friday At Log Friday F								Shot	Rectal	Other:	
# 3 Log # 3 Log # 3 Log # 3 Log # 4 Log # 4 Log # 4 Log Time Sunday Monday Tuesday Tuesday Thursday Th	-	Time Given	Daily AM	De	ily PM	Before Meal	After Meal	2x Dail		Daily	4x Daily
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# 3 Log winte the time verification for indicate under the day 1	-			Time	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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Time Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Friday Friday		(circle applicable)	As Needed	Bro	eakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Bedtim			
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AM/PM) and initial under the day given.		Instructions: Please w medicine was aiver	rite the time								
		AM/PM) and initial u	nder the day								

Special Notes for this Camper:



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.

Visit North Dakota 4-H online at www.ag.ndsu.edu/4h

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