



Planning the Annual 4-H Program

A well-planned program gives direction to 4-H throughout the year. Advanced planning outlines each person's responsibilities, allows ample time to prepare and makes certain all members have a chance to be involved during the year.

Good planning:

- Allows each member to be a part of decisions affecting the club.
- Gives each member specific jobs during the year.
- Helps assure a balanced program with a variety of events.
- Permits families to participate in 4-H events.
- Allows adequate preparation for meetings and events.
- Includes wide participation of members and volunteers.
- Helps ensure that the program is one that 4-H members, leaders and parents want.

Consider the situation

- When planning your 4-H program, consider the members' ages, where they live and what they do. Remember to take into account their involvement with other activities and organizations.
- Also study the community schools, businesses and people. How can 4-H work with other groups to develop a good program and improve the community?
- Refer to the current emphasis in the county 4-H program, noting the training available, county or district events and activities or emerging areas of interest and support.



Establish club goals

Goals state what club volunteers, members and parents would like to see the club accomplish. They should flow from the interests of the club members and the other considerations stated above. Here are some suggested club goals:

- Promote 4-H and recruit new 4-H members.
- Involve parents more in program activities.
- Learn more about the 4-H program in other counties.
- Participate in community service or service learning activities.
- Participate in project training meetings.
- Receive more assistance from project leaders.
- Promote youth participation in local 4-H programs and events.

Once specific goals are defined, leaders should guide club members in determining the specific steps they must take to achieve each goal. For example: to accomplish the goal of developing greater parent involvement, a committee might plan a parents' night, or plan visits with each parent at their homes.

Determine activities and events

- Keep club goals in mind in order to select appropriate activities.
- Decide which goals should receive greater emphasis.
- Select activities compatible to youth interest.
- Work with committees during the year to share responsibilities among everyone.

Prepare the program plan

- Make sure that the club plans and approves the program.
- Keep good minutes when planning.

The complete plan for the year should be written simply, reproduced and distributed to each member, parent and volunteer in the group. An annual 4-H program typically should include the following activities:

1. A monthly meeting set at a fixed time and place every month.
2. An educational field trip or presentation by special guest.
3. Recreational activities (games, songs, etc.) for each meeting.
4. Special events such as parties, dances or picnics.
5. At least one community service or service learning project.
6. Two or three projects lasting at least 2 months each.
7. One fund-raising activity.
8. At least one opportunity for each member to make a presentation.
9. One club recognition activity.
10. One promotional activity during National 4-H Week.
11. One meeting to plan the program for the following year.

New 4-H volunteers or club managers can use publication #7, "The 4-H Club Meeting", which provides a model agenda for conducting club meetings. This will help establish a routine for conducting monthly meetings.

Reference: This publication is an edited and updated version of the "Texas 4-H Leaders Handbook."

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