

Officer Elections

Youth club officers are a powerful component of having a high functioning 4-H club. Officers play an important role in guiding club decisions and conducting business meetings. Serving as an Officer is also an important leadership role.



Consider these important points when setting the stage for club elections:

- **4-H Calendar** – Setting a date for elections will offer youth time to plan, prepare and campaign for office. Consider holding fall elections in conjunction with an end of the year event.
- **Campaign** – Ask members to create a poster, speech or video to share with the others prior to the election meeting. Campaigning can help build relationships among youth and offer youth time to highlight the personal qualities they bring to the club. This also provides a public speaking opportunity.
- **Club Size & Meeting Location**—Take into consideration your club size and location when planning officer elections. Choose a method of secret voting that is easy for your group. Ensure that all youth may be heard, and larger meeting spaces may require a microphone or sound system for everyone to hear.
- **Qualifications for Candidacy** -Cloverbud members (ages 5-8) may not serve as officers. Review the Club Bylaws for officer requirements such as age or years of club participation as each county club may be different.

Election Meeting Tips

In-person Meetings:

- Have space for youth running for office to stand up in front of the group so everyone knows who they are voting for.
- It is helpful for members to wear name tags or have some other form of identification available such as table tents.
- Use a microphone so everyone can hear campaign speeches, election process and results.
- Select an adult volunteer who is not related to a candidate for tallying results.

Virtual Meetings:

- All member names should be visible on screen.
- Use the chat box to privately submit votes to a selected adult volunteer.
- Teach youth how to mute and unmute microphones to help with sound quality.
- Polls can be used for voting if a slate of officers has previously been approved by the club.

Additional Resources:

- Visit [Ohio4h.org](https://ohio4h.org)
 - Grab & Go Club Meeting Tool Kit
 - Campaigning for Club Officer Positions
 - Why are 4-H Club Elections Important?
- Visit <https://ohio4h.org/officerresources>
 - Videos
 - Record Books
 - Resource Guides
 - Parliamentary Procedure Resources
 - What does it Take to Be 4-H Club Officer?

Created by: Audrey Dimmerling, Jenna Hoyt, and Stacey Perry, March 2021

Ohio 4-H
ohio4h.org



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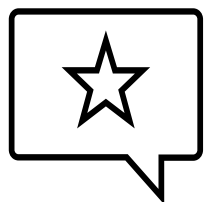
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Decide as a club any requirements for campaigning for office. This may vary by club. Considerations include:

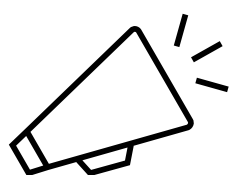
- Minimum member age
- Minimum number of years in the club
- Availability to run for more than one office if not elected

Review club officer positions yearly. All clubs will elect a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.



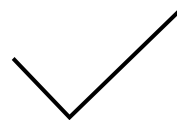
There are many other positions clubs can have officers elected for such as Health Living and Safety Officer, Recreation Leader, Historian, News Reporter, and Community Service Officer. Clubs may also choose to create an office specific for their club such as Chaplin, Recycling Record Keeper, or Refreshment Coordinator. Be sure to discuss and/or provide handouts or links to information including:

- Explain officer role
- Leadership characteristics
- Time commitment
- Resources available



Campaigning for office can be fun! Schedule and announce when youth can begin to campaign for office. Officer campaigns can be unique to each club. Some suggestions for campaigns include:

- Create videos
- Design posters
- Recite campaign speeches



Make the voting official by using a secret ballot vote. Ballot collection should be organized by officer position and separated by candidate for accurate counting. Select volunteers to help prior to the meeting. If virtual, make sure all youth understand the process for voting prior to casting the first vote. There are a variety of ways to collect a secret ballot such as:

- Printed ballot
- Individual names written on pieces of paper per officer
- Eyes closed, raised hands
- Heads down, raised hands
- Approved slate of officers
- Virtual voting through polls
 - To ensure each youth has a vote, individual devices should be used.
 - Make sure the results are not publicly shared.
- Submit vote using a chat box sent directly to an appointed adult



Installation of officers is a celebration and recognition of the new leadership within a club. Newly elected youth will take an oath to perform their duties to the best of their abilities and lead by example for all members in the club. When planning installation ceremonies, consider ways to:

- Involve club advisors
- Utilize past officers
- Announce to the club the names and positions of all newly elected officers
- Present officer resource and record books

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