

OHIO 4-H MEMBERSHIP

Revised October 2022

4-H is the youth development initiative of Ohio State University Extension (OSUE) and is open to all youth in Ohio.

Membership Eligibility Policy

(Approved by State 4-H Internal Advisory Committee on July 11, 2017)

Ohio 4-H membership is based on a child's age AND grade as of January 1 of the current calendar year. Eligibility for Cloverbud participation begins when a child is age 5 and enrolled in kindergarten as of January 1. Eligibility for participation in 4-H projects and competitive events begins when a child is age 8 and in third grade as of January 1. Any youth age 9 or above is eligible for project membership, regardless of grade level. Membership requires enrollment in an authorized Ohio 4-H club or group under the direction of an OSU Extension professional or an approved adult volunteer. A youth's 4-H eligibility ends December 31 the year they turn 19. Participating in Ohio 4-H is a privilege and responsibility for individuals and is subject to the Ohio 4-H Code of Conduct and applicable policies of The Ohio State University.

Youth may enroll in 4-H at any time, but must enroll by the county's enrollment deadline to be eligible for the full range of 4-H opportunities, including but not limited to participation in county and state fairs. 4-H clubs and other types of 4-H programs may begin any time throughout the year.

Local 4-H clubs and groups may establish (in their constitutions) dates by which youth must be enrolled in order to participate in their group. In addition, County Extension 4-H Programs may establish reasonable deadlines by which members must be enrolled and enrollment forms turned in to the county Extension Office in order for members to participate in specified activities (such as project evaluation, fair, and awards).

The following are types of 4-H delivery modes in which an individual may participate in 4-H. All delivery methods may not be available in each county.

1. **4-H Community Club Program** – An organized group of at least five youth members from three different families. Because Ohio 4-H follows Parliamentary Procedures for voting, three of the five members must be at least age 8 and enrolled in the 3rd grade, or age 9 or above regardless of grade level. This club is led by an adult volunteer who has completed the OSUE volunteer selection process, with a planned program that is carried on throughout all or most of the year. 4-H Clubs may meet in a variety of locations and have elected officers and a set of rules approved by the membership to govern the club. 4-H club programs include business meetings; educational experiences in 4-H projects and leadership, citizenship and workforce preparation activities; and social experiences to enhance the cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development of youth. Project learning is conducted in a variety of subject matter areas and on a self-study basis or in project groups where instruction is provided to either direct or supplement the project experience. Additionally, members must attend a minimum number of 4-H meetings to be considered a "4-H member in good standing". County Extension Offices shall determine what the minimum number of meeting expectations are.



2. **4-H Cloverbud Club Program** – Ohio youth, age 5 and in kindergarten until they reach age 8 and third grade may enroll in the Ohio 4-H Cloverbud Program. The primary goal of the Cloverbud program is to promote children's healthy development—mentally, physically, socially, and emotionally. The Cloverbud program provides an excellent opportunity for every child to reach his or her highest potential because early life experiences, even subtle ones, affect future development. The Cloverbud program is developmentally-age appropriate, therefore it is: fun and positive, leader-directed, activity-based, noncompetitive, success-oriented, and group-centered. Refer to the 4-H Cloverbud Program Foundations for Extension 4-H policies relative to the 4-H Cloverbud program. The Cloverbud Program may be a group within a 4-H Community Club, or conducted as a countywide program. If part of a 4-H Community Club, Cloverbuds may only count for no more than two of the five minimum number of required members.
3. **4-H SPIN (Special Interest) Club Program** –A 4-H SPIN Club is a special interest club where five (5) or more youth, from at least 3 different families, learn about a specific topic of interest. Youth, ages 5-18 may join a SPIN club and participate in a minimum series of six (6) hands-on learning experiences to gain knowledge and skills. All 4-H SPIN Clubs are led by Extension personnel or an approved volunteer.
4. **4-H Camping Program** – Ohio 4-H camps are Extension planned intentionally designed, creative experiential learning endeavors in which participants engage with each other, older teens, and adult staff in order for youth to develop decision-making skills, accept personal responsibility, and have a sense of self determination in a carefully supervised and supportive environment which typically incorporates aspects of the natural surroundings. Ohio 4-H camp programs involve camp counselor selection, training, planning, and evaluation. Participation is not restricted to members of organized 4-H clubs, and youth may attend resident camps, multi-day camps, and single day camps.
5. **4-H School or Community Programming** –These involve series of experiential learning activities that are delivered in partnership with a school or other educational entity. This may involve school enrichment in classrooms during the regularly scheduled school day to enrich the educational curriculum or after school programs offered to youth outside school hours.
6. **4-H Participants** – Youth attend a one-time Extension-based program such as a workshop, clinic, or seminar. This is particularly true for youth participating in one-time programs that are organized and resourced by Extension personnel.