

Ohio 4-H Membership

Revised July 2017

4-H is the youth development initiative of Ohio State University Extension and is open to all boys and girls in Ohio. Youth involved in Extension-based programs are enrolled as either 4-H Members or 4-H Participants.

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. Eligibility for participation in 4-H projects and competitive events begins when a child is age 8 and in third grade. 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 he or she turns 19. Joining 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. 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 be enrolled in 4-H. All delivery methods may NOT be available in each county.

1. **4-H Club Program** – An organized group of at least five youth members from three different families, at least age 8 and enrolled in the 3rd grade, or age 9 or above regardless of grade level, 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 typically have elected officers and a set of rules approved by the membership to govern the club. 4-H club programs may 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.



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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. Counties will utilize developmentally-appropriate, cooperation-based methods to give feedback and recognition, while minimizing failure through using activities consistent with the Cloverbud Program parameters or the state-approved Cloverbud curriculum. 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 Club.
3. **4-H Special Emphasis Program** – A series of experiential learning activities that are delivered in a group setting for youth who are at least age 8 and enrolled in the 3rd grade, or age 9 or above regardless of grade level, are not tied to any school curriculum, and focus on a topic of particular need, issue, or interest. This includes youth involved in 4-H day camp programs, 4-H interstate exchanges, 4-H international study tours, 4-H Shooting Sports clubs and so forth.
4. **4-H Overnight Camping Program** – Extension-planned educational experience of group living in the out-of-doors, which includes being away from home at least one night (resident, primitive or travel camping) and is not restricted to members of organized 4-H clubs.
5. **4-H School Enrichment Group** – Series of experiential learning activities that are delivered in a classroom or other educational setting, and provided to achieve selected 4-H learning outcomes as well as enrich the classroom curriculum.
6. **4-H Participants** – Youth enrolled in one-time Extension-based programs 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.
7. **4-H After School** – Educational programs offered to youth outside of school hours, usually in a school or other community center and incorporating 4-H curricula.
8. **4-H Individual Study/Family Learning Programs** – Planned learning which occurs independently of a formal group setting such as a club, as an individual, paired, or family learning effort under the direction of an adult or a parent (at least one adult must meet the requirements to be a 4-H volunteer leader). Examples include self-study, home study courses, mentoring or shadowing with an expert, 4-H international host family experiences, and whole families learning together.