

LETTERS TO NEW LEADERS



Letter 2: Getting Started with a 4-H Project

In this letter you'll find:

- How to Recruit 4-H Members-- And How Many Should We Have?
- How is My Group Enrolled as an Official 4-H Project?
- Are There Dues for 4-H Members?
- What About Insurance?
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- How Often Will Our Project Meet?
- Who Pays for Project Materials?

Dear Leader,

This letter has answers to some of the most frequently asked questions about actually starting a 4-H project.

How to Recruit 4-H Members- And How Many Should We Have?

First of all, how many members? 4-H projects can have as few as two to three members or as many as the leader feels can be effectively included in the group. Some suggest that 6 to 10 members per adult leader is an optimum number. The optimum number of project members for your group will depend in part on your project area. It also depends on how many co-leaders or assistant leaders will be working with you. Limit your first group to a number with

which you and your co-leader feel comfortable!

As for recruiting members, it is seldom hard to do. Contact your community club leader. They usually have names of people who want to participate in your project. Your club or group may have a recruiting program or other ideas for recruiting new members.

Because 4-H receives federal and state funds, we must be certain our programs are made available to all people equally without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, or disability.

As for recruiting leaders--you may find it helpful to recruit some adults to help with the project leadership such as co-leaders or assistant leaders. Interested parents, 4-H alumni, or friends are often willing to help. This gives the leader much needed assistance and also provides continuity for project meetings in case of a leader's absence.

How is My Group Enrolled as an Official 4-H Project?

Your county office of the Cooperative Extension has the necessary enrollment forms for you to complete and submit to the office. Official enrollment is usually done through the community club leaders.

California uses a computer-based enrollment system, which means the form must be filled out completely and accurately. Be sure to check the codes listed on the back of the form.

The 4-H year starts each July 1st and runs through June 30th. All 4-H members must re-enroll every year. Each county will have a due date for enrollment. It is a good idea to enroll promptly so you and your members stay continually on the mailing list and receive the monthly newsletter. In addition, some counties also have a deadline for enrollment additions and changes in order to be eligible to participate in state and county fairs and other activities.

Are There Dues for 4-H Members?

There is a small annual program fee for both members and leaders. Some clubs also charge a small fee to help pay for club newsletters or other club correspondence and activities.

What About Insurance?

4-H leaders automatically have limited liability insurance coverage through the University of California when leading a 4-H group or 4-H activity. This coverage is for officially enrolled leaders who have completed county and state requirements for enrollment, orientation and fingerprinting. Please read the "Risk" brochure you received at your leader's orientation for details.

All properly enrolled 4-H leaders and members automatically receive accident/sickness coverage. This insurance covers medical costs for illness or injuries that take place at 4-H events or activities. For more information, please see the brochure entitled "California 4-H Accident/Sickness Insurance Program."

Where Will Our Project Meet?

Most project groups meet at the leaders home. This is usually easiest for the leaders. Groups may also rotate meetings from one member's home to another so that each member has the opportunity to host. Most club meetings are held at schools or community centers. Such facilities are sometimes available for project meetings as well.

How Often Will Our Project Meet?

There are several possibilities in choosing a day and time for club meetings, such as:

- Once a week after school (this works well for elementary age students)
- Once every two weeks, after school, or on a weeknight
- Once a month, on a week night
- Once a month, on a Saturday or Sunday (sometimes this works best for clubs



- with members of a wide age span)
- Other variations, limited only by the needs of your project members

It is recommended that a 4-H project meet between five and ten times during the year—more often if desired or needed. This provides continuity for the project as well as time for project development and accomplishment of individual and project goals.

Some projects can be taught on a short-term or seasonal basis. Projects can start anytime during the year.

Who Pays for Project Materials?

4-H members should pay for the project materials they use. Leaders can purchase needed items and have members reimburse them, or they may supply members with a list of items needed for each meeting. Leaders should not be reimbursed for more than the value of items purchased and can not charge members for their time. Some leaders have secured donations from local businesses to keep project costs low for their members.

If you have any questions or concerns, we'd love to help you!



REFERENCE MATERIALS

4-H Enrollment Form

California 4-H Accident/Sickness Insurance Program

Publication Catalog

“Risk” brochure

How can I use the information in this letter:

1. New activities to plan into our 4-H Program:

2. Other people who could help us and how they might help:

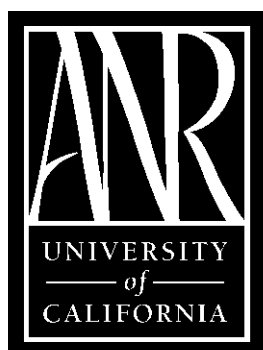
3. Questions to ask Cooperative extension staff and other leaders:

Cooperative Extension
U.S. Department of Agriculture
University of California
Oakland CA 94612-3560

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University of California Cooperative Extension

Fresno County



NEW LEADERS



Letter 2: Getting Started with a 4-H Project

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