

Cornell Cooperative Extension Ontario County



Ontario County 4-H Overview

Some sections in this packet are based on sections in Orleans and Madison County information packets.

Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities

Cornell Cooperative Extension provides equal program and employment opportunities. NYS College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, MYS College of Human Ecology, and NYS College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell University, Cooperative Extension jobs, county governing bodies, and U.S. Department of Agriculture, cooperating.

Welcome to Ontario County 4-H

We are so pleased that you are interested in becoming a part of our 4-H family. The 4-H program is a national initiative designed to provide youth with a multitude of opportunities that help them to learn and grow as individuals of their community. With endless encouragement and support through this program, youth develop into responsible and self-driven adults. If there are ever any questions, feel free to reach out to your child's club leader or Extension office staff.

Here in Ontario County, our 4-H staff strives to build strong relationships with the youth and families we serve in the community. Our office is open Monday-Friday from 8am to 4pm except on major national holidays. If you would like to get into contact with the 4-H office, the phone number is **(585) 394-3977**. We are more than happy to answer any questions and guide you in the right direction.

The History of 4-H

During the late 1800's, it was known that many farmers of the time did not accept new agricultural concepts developed by researchers. To their surprise, the youth of those communities were very interested in learning more about the research being worked on and had an open mind to what resources were available. Because the younger population in the communities were more interested in implementing these new technologies, they would then share these experiences with the adults. By doing this, newer, updated technologies were introducing the new ideas to the adults through rural youth programs.

By getting this started, the idea of a "hands-on" learning experience was introduced and was a way to connect public schools to country-life. Creating clubs in 1902 was the first step to learning more about the research and how to incorporate it into their own community. The first official clubs started in Clark County, Ohio. Douglas County, Minnesota started the first afterschool programs and fairs shortly after. The clover pin with the H's on each of the four leaves was created by Jessie Field Shambaugh in 1910. By 1912, they were officially known as 4-H Clubs.

After passing the Smith-Lever Act in 1914, the Cooperative Extension System was created and nationalized 4-H. This system has a partnership with the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) within the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). There are more than 100 land-grant universities and 3,000 county offices across the United States. Cooperative Extension combines the expertise and resources of federal, state, and local governments and is designed to meet the need for research, knowledge and educational programs.

Today, 4-H is spread across the United States and serves the youth of rural, urban, and suburban communities. 4-H'ers have the opportunity to explore various topic areas such as agricultural sciences, animal science, rockets, robotics, environment, computer science, healthy living, workforce development, family consumer sciences like cooking and sewing, and much more. They also encouraged to tackle global issues such as food security, climate change, sustainability, and childhood obesity.

Mission Statement: 4-H connects youth to hands-on learning opportunities that help them grow into competent, caring, contributing members of society.

Objectives of 4-H

The purpose of 4-H is to strengthen the physical, mental, moral and social development of youth , helping boys and girls to develop into competent, committed and self-committed adults. The main objective is the personal development of the youth by taking participation in projects, 4-H events, and other wholesome activities. 4-H is valued because it is a supplement, not a replacement to other learning experiences young people may have through other institutions.

4-H is intended for everyone, regardless of race, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, sex, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, sexual orientation or parental status.

4-H Pledge

"I pledge **my head** to clearer thinking

My heart to greater loyalty

My hands to larger service,

And **my health** to better living

For my club, my community, my country and my world."

Hand Motions:

"My Head": touch forehead with fingers on right hand

"My Heart": place right hand on heart

"My Hands": both hands waist-high, palms up

"My Health": both hands alongside body naturally

The colors of 4-H are green and white. White represents purity and the green symbolizes life, springtime and youth.



Beliefs About 4-H

- The 4-H member is more important than the project
- Projects are one of the best tools to “learn by doing” in young people.
- 4-H’ers should be their own best exhibit. This means they have personal manners, attitudes, courtesy towards others, and dress appropriately with clean physical appearance.
- No award is ever worth sacrificing the reputation of a 4-H member or leader.
- Competition is a natural part of life, but should be done so with respect and careful planning. Do not get carried away.
- A Blue ribbon 4-H’er with a red ribbon exhibit is more desirable than a red ribbon 4-H’er with a blue ribbon exhibit.
- Every 4-H member needs to be noticed, to feel important, to achieve some degree of success and to be praised.
- 4-H leaders and staff are responsible to provide guidance to 4-H members in learning *how* to think, not *what* to think.

4-H Organizational Structure

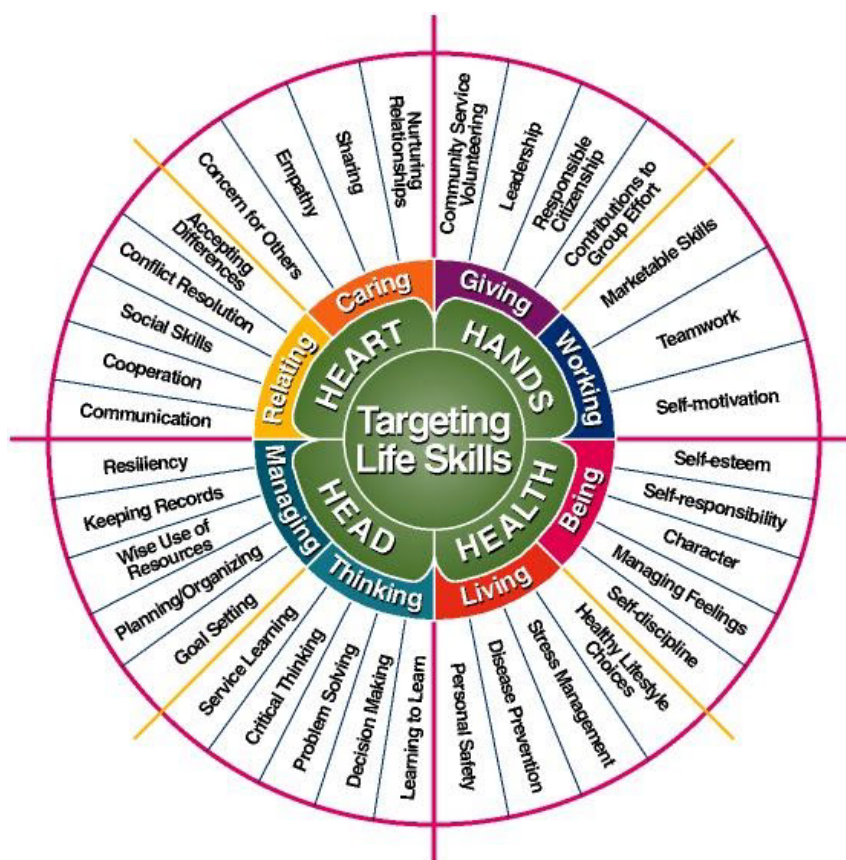
4-H is a part of the Cooperative Extension system comprised of land-grant universities in every state and local satellite offices. Our program is part of Cornell Cooperative Extension, receiving resource from Cornell University but operating as a separate local organization.

Developing Life Skills

In order to have a high-quality life in adulthood, focus on youth development is a key factor. Youth development is a process that does not happen overnight, and needs support from everyone. The greatest way to have experiences are to carefully and plan thoughtfully by:

1. Encouraging life skill development while delivering subject-matter content.
2. Achieve specific outcomes.

A skill is defined as the learned ability to do something well. Life skills are those that help an individual become successful in living a productive and fulfilling life. The Targeting Life Skills Model categorizes life skills in relationship with the four “H’s” that represent Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. See on the next page the model:



Acknowledgment: Targeting Life Skills Model, by Pat Hendricks, Iowa State University

How do Youth Learn in This Program?

The 4-H program is based on an experiential learning model which encourages hands-on learning. Thus, the 4-H program has two important slogans:

- **“Learn by doing”** expresses 4-H’s philosophy that youth learn better by accomplishing something themselves as opposed to being educated lecture-style.
- **“Make the Best Better”** expressed 4-H’s philosophy that there is always room for improvement and that youth should be measured against their progress, not just on how excellent their project is. Inexperienced members are praised for effort, while experienced members are encouraged to take their project to the next level and never stagnate in their learning.

With a “learn by doing” mentality, youth can be involved in hands-on experiences with the guidance of 4-H leaders and parents. By participating in these experiences, they learn useful skills and learn with people of all different ages from 5-19. As a program, this is unique because all these age groups help each other learn and develop that will help them be successful in the future. They are then able to serve their community and country by implementing these skills in real-life situations and scenarios. There are many different areas of opportunity your new 4-H’er can participate in:

- **Hands On Projects:** 4-H’ers work on projects in certain areas either individually or with their clubs. There are many project areas from STEM and animal science to art and music, almost anything can be a 4-H project. Clubs generally work together on certain projects throughout the year, and the county 4-H office supplements club efforts by holding workshops taught by project area experts. Several competitive and noncompetitive events are also held throughout the year such as Harvest Food Fest, shooting sports competitions, the Great 4-H Cookoff, etc.
- **Fair Exhibits:** Ontario County encourages building skills by making projects to then bring to our County Fair in July. Guidelines for submitting projects are clearly stated in detail in the project fairbook. This fairbook has different project sections and varieties that will then be transcribed onto entry cards for each project item. These cards are available at the 4-H office. Projects are judged by experts in that area of the project and are displayed in the 4-H building at the fair. The most rewarding part of the judging process is the members get to communicate with the judge and explain what they did. Here, they also take constructive criticism and learn what they can improve upon. After projects are evaluated for the County Fair, they are put on display in county booths throughout fair week, and exceptional projects are selected to advance to State Fair in Syracuse, NY.
- **Animal Science Projects:** Many people think of animal science projects when

they think of 4-H. 4-H'ers have the opportunity to learn more about their pet or livestock through the 4-H program, and 4-H animal shows are a big attraction and county and state fair. If a youth does not have an animal but is interested in animal science, there are still many opportunities for them to get involved in this project area. Animal science knowledge competitions such as dairy bowl, poultry judging, and many others allows youth to learn and compete without ever owning an animal. Workshops and clinics are held throughout the year; some require an animal, and some do not.

- **4-H Trips:** Youth can take advantage of several local, state and national 4-H trips. Some popular trips are the Ontario County 4-H fun day at Roseland Water Park, Capital Days which is a citizenship trip to Albany, national 4-H conference, and Career Explorations at Cornell University.
- **Oral Presentations:** Public speaking is one of the most significant skills youth will gain from this program. Decades of past and present members express that if it weren't for 4-H, they would have never been able to gain the public speaking skills they use on a daily basis. Topics, as long as age appropriate, can be on anything they are interested in. There are many different kinds of presentations they can give. They can present a demonstration, speech, biography, science, history--- the list is endless. There are three levels that Ontario County participates in every year. First, is the county level. This is where only Ontario County participates in this level. All clubs and individual members who choose to participate in public speaking in February give their presentation at the CCE office in Canandaigua, NY. Here, they present in a room with their fellow club members, parents, other members in 4-H and finally, a panel of 2 or 3 judges. After presenting, they leave the room with one of the judges and discuss the topic and how they presented. This is an opportunity to praise the highlights and provide constructive criticism. After these presentations are given, a select few are chosen to attend districts. Districts is the level in which the neighboring counties gather in one location and do the same process, just on a larger scale. Cloverbuds are not allowed to attend the district level; only those who are ages 8-19 who are members, are allowed to attend. This is a slightly more intense level where judges tend to be more critical. Through this experience, members gain more confidence in their public speaking skills and this is one of their first experiences in this role of leadership they will



use throughout their life.

- **Record Keeping:** The ability to record is an essential life skill. Youth can practice this skill by making timely entries in their 4-H record books. These records help members evaluate and learn from their 4-H experiences and develop business sense skills. Members keep records on every project in which they are enrolled.
- **Recreation:** Members can learn the importance of enjoying life, have a balanced life with leisure, school, work, etc. This can also help them build social skills through interacting with their peers. This can also help them build leadership skills.
- **Contests:** Members learn cooperative and competitive skills through competition. They learn skills related to their contest and learn what it takes to be excellent at those set of skills. Awards can be provided in recognition of their efforts. This also teaches and emphasizes the importance of good sportsmanship.
- **4-H Camp:** Ontario County is fortunate enough to have 4-H Camp Bristol Hills. Here, experiences in educational and recreational activities allow children to learn more about nature and living with people. For more information on 4-H Camp Bristol Hills, visit our website! <http://cceontario.org/4-h-camp-bristol-hills>
- **Service Learning:** Community service projects are an important part of the 4-H experience and help youth develop compassion and devotion to those in the community.
- **Recognition and Awards:** Every year, youth are recognized and rewarded in many different ways for the work they do and the things they accomplish. The broad spectrum of awards ranges from peer acceptance, to ribbons, to award trips and scholarships.
- **Fundraising:** Members are very highly encouraged to contribute to their club through a fundraiser. Fundraising allows more financial room to participate in trips and other educational activities that may have a fee. By working together, this allows the members to build their team, keep track of finances, and stay organized and help build leadership skills. Although there is some assistance, it is still important to fundraise for your club.
- **Club Meetings:** In club meetings, members can voice ideas and learn how to



conduct meetings using *parliamentary procedure*. During meetings, members have committees that focus on specific goals that they want to accomplish. Members also get the opportunity to learn how to communicate with other members and peers. Essentially, your club is your biggest support system that has your leader, parents and other members. Clubs are created with the authorization from the local extension educator of Ontario County. To create a new 4-H club, or to join an existing club, you will need to contact Sarah Bagley, the 4-H Resource Educator or Amy Morrissey, the 4-H Program Educator. Clubs consist of both boys and girls and run under the supervision of a volunteer 4-H club leader. Clubs can form because of similar interests, and can consist of people from school, in your neighborhood and different locations. Clubs are recommended to have at least 5 members, but it is not required. The 4-H leader must be present in order to have a meeting. Clubs are *highly encouraged* to participate in a community service project that helps benefit others. There is a wide range of ideas and opportunities. Hours are recorded and go towards their achievement award at the end of the year. Clubs can also relate to special interests, such as specific project areas like sewing, crocheting, painting, or even animals like cows, sheep and swine. In Ontario County, we have a widespread area of interests and many different clubs. You can even come up with a creative name for your club!

Membership

Membership in 4-H is based off your child's age as of January 1st of the 4-H year. Youth who are between the ages of 5-7 are considered Cloverbuds and are not judged or evaluated competitively. Members who are between the ages of 8-19 can participate as a traditional member and are judged/evaluated competitively.

What Are You Waiting For?

4-H is a nationally respected program providing access to local and state resources and making a difference in the lives of young people all across America. Whether you are a parent looking to get your child involved in 4-H for the first time or are an adult who wants to know how you could help, we want to hear from you!

Contact Information

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