

Penn State **Extension**

Starting a 4-H Club

Creating Club By-Laws

Why does a 4-H club need by-laws? By having fair and written rules, the rights and privileges of all members can be clearly understood. Also, a copy of the club by-laws is needed to obtain the required club charter. The following is a suggested format for 4-H club by-laws. Some sections may be adapted to meet local conditions. Be sure to send a copy of your club's approved by-laws to your county 4-H office. Include in the by-laws the date it was approved as well as the date it was most recently revised.

Suggested Format:

By-Laws for the (4-H Club Name) , County, Pennsylvania

ARTICLE I – Name/Identity

Section 1 – Name

The name of this organization shall be (4-H Club Name) .

Section 2 – Motto

The club motto shall be “To Make the Best Better”.

Section 3 – Emblem



The club emblem shall be a green four-leaf clover bearing a white “H” on each leaflet. Authorization to use the 4-H name and emblem is granted by Penn State Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development, the College of Agricultural Sciences is responsible for oversight, guidance and support of this 4-H Club. Guidelines for use of the 4-H clover can be found on the National 4-H Headquarters website at <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/youthdevelopment4h.cfm>

Section 4 – Pledge

The club pledge shall be:

I pledge...
My Head to clearer thinking,
My Heart to greater loyalty.
My Hands to larger service, and

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*My Health to better living, for
My club, my community, my country, and my world*

ARTICLE II – Mission and Purpose

Section 1 – Mission of 4-H

The Penn State Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development program uses a learn-by-doing approach to enable youth to develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need to become competent, caring, and contributing citizens of the world. This mission is accomplished by using the knowledge and resources of the land-grant university system, along with the involvement of caring adults.

Section 2 – Purpose of Club

The purpose of this club shall be to improve ourselves, our homes, our club, and our community.

Your club mission (if applicable)

Section 3 – 4-H Compliance

This 4-H club will comply with all Penn State University, Cooperative Extension, and 4-H/Youth Development policies under the guidance and support of 4-H faculty/staff.

ARTICLE III – 4-H Charter

This 4-H Club agrees to follow all 4-H Charter guidelines. Once the 4-H Charter is granted, it will not expire. In the event that this 4-H Club falls below the basic 4-H requirements as outlined in the charter application, the charter will be revoked and this 4-H club will need to reapply for chartering and agree to meet the requirements.

ARTICLE IV – Membership

Section 1 – Eligibility

Any boy or girl in this county, age 5-18, as determined by their age on January 1 of the current year, may become a member of this club by applying for membership in at least one of the approved club projects and by agreeing to live up to the standards set by the club. Youth 5-7, may be 4-H Cloverbud members. (However, the size of the club may be limited due to space limitations or the leader's available time or ability to accommodate more members.)

4-H Youth Development programs are offered to all youth. The Pennsylvania State University is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to programs, facilities, admission, and employment without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. It is the policy of the University to maintain an academic and work environment free of discrimination, including harassment. The Pennsylvania State University prohibits discrimination and harassment against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, genetic information, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status and retaliation due to the reporting of discrimination or harassment. Discrimination, harassment, or retaliation against faculty, staff, or students will not be tolerated at The Pennsylvania State University. Direct all inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy to the Affirmative Action Director, The Pennsylvania State University, 328 Boucke Building, University Park, PA 16802-5901; Tel 814-863-0471.

All possible efforts will be made to include rather than exclude youth in events conducted by the 4-H Youth Development program.

Section 2 – Responsibility

Each member must attend at least 70 percent of the meetings during the year. If a member is unable to attend a meeting due to a valid excuse (such as sickness or an important school or family event), the member must contact the club leader, secretary, or president in advance to be excused. Each member should also complete an approved club project and keep a project record book.

Additional or different membership requirements may be included here. However, the non-discrimination statement must be included exactly as printed in Section 1.

ARTICLE V – Meetings

Section 1 – Dates

The club shall meet regularly every (_____ day/week _____) at (_____ time _____) at (_____ the designated place _____).

Special meetings may be called by the president and 4-H leader as needed, with 10 days advance notice.

Section 2 – Quorum

A simple majority (one half plus one) of members must be present to conduct official business of the club.

Section 3 – Order of business

The following order of business shall be followed at regular club meetings: *(Adjust to your club's needs)*

1. Meeting called to order
2. Club rises, salutes the American flag with the Pledge of Allegiance and then recites the 4-H Pledge (to the 4-H flag)
3. Roll call
4. Minutes of last meeting
5. Treasurer's report
6. Report of committees
7. Old or unfinished business
8. New business
9. 4-H leader's report
10. Announcements
11. Adjournment
12. Educational program/project work
13. Recreation/refreshments

ARTICLE VI – Committees

Standing and/or special committees will be created as needed. Members are expected to volunteer for committee assignments. The president has the authority to appoint committee chairs and committee members.

ARTICLE VII – Officers

The officers of this club shall include: president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and reporter. Their duties shall be as follows:

- The president will preside at all meetings, uphold the by-laws, and adhere to parliamentary procedure. The president shall appoint committee chairs and members.

- The vice president shall preside over the club in the absence of the president. The vice president shall assist the president and serve as a link to all committees

The secretary shall record minutes of each meeting and report at the next meeting. The secretary will also keep attendance records and write club correspondence.

- The treasurer shall keep the club's financial records and report on the club's finances at each meeting. See Article IX.

- The reporter shall collect newspaper and county newsletter clippings, photos, etc. for a club scrapbook/bulletin board/history. The reporter writes club meeting reports and sends them to the county 4-H office, and also may write and send club news to local newspapers, radio stations, etc.

(A club may have more or fewer officers. In any case, duties of each one should be written and included in this article.)

ARTICLE V III – Election of Officers

The officers of this club shall be elected at the first regular meeting in (*month*). They shall hold office for one year. All active members are eligible to run for an office and to vote. Voting is by majority rule and done by secret ballot.

ARTICLE IX – Fundraising and Treasury Guidelines and Policies

This 4-H Club will follow *PA 4-H Treasuries* and *Fundraising* policies, as well as IRS and PA Charitable Registration regulations as applicable. All bank accounts should operate under the club's EIN (not the leader's personal information or social security number) and must require two authorized signatures. The 4-H Club Treasury Annual Review form must be completed and provided to the county 4-H staff by December 30 of each year.

ARTICLE X – Amendments

These by-laws may be amended at a regular meeting by a two-thirds vote cast by those in attendance, providing notice has been given at the previous meeting. Review of by-laws will take place at least every two years. If by-laws are revised, a copy should be provided to the county 4-H office.

ARTICLE XI – Dissolution

If this 4-H Club disbands, the 4-H club leader must immediately notify the county 4-H staff. All assets shall be assigned to County 4-H Program through the appropriate county 4-H advisory group, designated by the 4-H club and approved by county 4-H staff.

By-laws approved (date) , revised (date)

Adapted from NJ 4-H Leader Training Series – Starting a 4-H Club.

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An **OUTREACH** program of the College of Agricultural Sciences

Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences research and extension programs are funded in part by Pennsylvania counties, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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