Virtual Connect
Engagement Opportunities and Expectations

Virtual 4-H connections can help us all stay engaged in 4-H during this time of social distancing and may be a way to strengthen networking and sharing in the months and years to come. Below are options and guidance for you to connect with your 4-H clubs and groups, continue your annual club plans, work and share 4-H project progress, conduct demonstrations and continue learning.

VIRTUAL CONNECTION BEST PRACTICES

When conducting any virtual connection (club meeting, project workshop, etc.), be sure to follow these best practices guidelines.

- Only Certified UME 4-H Volunteers and/or UME faculty/staff should host a virtual connection.
- Ensure a minimum of two Certified UME 4-H volunteers are scheduled to attend the virtual connection or conference meetings.
  - They must be present the entire time and it is recommended they join prior to the start of the meeting and wait until all youth have signed off before they exit.

PREPARING TO CONNECT:

- Consider connection options
  - UMD options include
    - Zoom (ADA compliant)
    - WebEx (With your 4-H educator)
    - Google Hangouts
    - Google Meets

  All offer video and/or phone conferencing options. You can also prerecord and share.

  - Personal options
    - If you choose to use a personal virtual connection, be sure to have it approved by your local 4-H Team prior to sending it to youth and families.
    - If using a personal virtual connection, it is recommended you invite your local 4-H Team to attend if available.
- Setting up your virtual connection
  - Contact your local 4-H faculty/staff to assist in setting up a virtual connection.

- Consider log in, password or other control measures to monitor/manage attendance.
- Use only "group chat" and turn off "private chat" in any virtual connection.
- Turn off "screen sharing" for participants unless the content has been approved.
- Turn off all annotations i.e. white boards within the program.
- Consider audience and attendance options.
  - Allow for the greatest flexibility to fit the greatest needs. It is recommended that you offer phone and video conferencing when possible.
  - Determine the target audience and how to control participation.
- Limit connection to one hour or less. Anything longer would require taking a break during the session.
- Communicate connection information and time.
  - Send connection information to parents and youth via email.

    Remember to never communicate with a youth one on one. Always copy a parent or another adult.
  - Send connection information to the local 4-H Team.

ZOOM SECURITY TIPS

- **Require registration:** This shows you every email address of everyone who signed up to join your class and can help you evaluate who's attending.
- **Use a random meeting ID:** It's best practice to generate a random meeting ID for your meeting, so it can't be shared multiple times.
- **Password-protect the room:** Create a password and share with your families via email so only those intended to join can access your room.
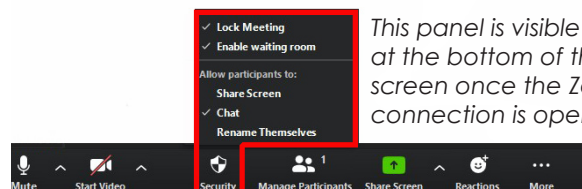
This panel is visible at the bottom of the screen once the Zoom connection is open.

- **Disable join before host:** Individual cannot join the meeting before you join and will see a pop-up that says, "The meeting is waiting for the host to join."
- **Manage annotation:** You should disable participant annotation in the screen sharing controls to prevent youth from annotating on a shared screen and disrupting the meeting.

☐ Recurring meeting	
☑ Required	
⦿ Generate Automatically ◯ Personal Meeting ID	
☑ Require meeting password [995306]	
Host ⦿ on ◯ off	
Participant ◯ on ⦿ off	
◯ Telephone ◯ Computer Audio ⦿ Both	
Dial from United States of America Edit	
☐ Enable join before host	*This panel is what you see when you set up your meeting.*
☑ Mute participants upon entry ☑	
☑ Enable waiting room	

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- How to steps for Google Meets go to https://go.umd.edu/GMeet
- How to steps for Google Hangout go to https://go.umd.edu/GHangout
- Maine 4-H has some great tips for virtual meetings go to https://go.umd.edu/MaineVirtual

CONDUCTING THE CONNECTION:

- Certified UME 4-H Volunteers should join prior to the start of the virtual connection.
  - Do not record the meeting.
  Maryland law prohibits the recording of any conversation (by any means) without notice and consent of all affected parties.
  - Mute upon entry or have participants mute unless speaking.
  - Turn computer cameras off unless needed for visual aid.

This can help with bandwidth issues and processing speed. This also limits photo bombing and increases privacy.

- 4-H members should identify themselves with their first names only.
- Designate someone (club meeting: secretary, etc.) to take minutes.
- If youth directly contact an adult, a second adult should be included in all responses.
- Please keep track of virtual connections and participation for your club records.
  - Certified UME 4-H Volunteers should remain in the virtual connection until all youth have signed off before they exit.

VIRTUAL CONNECTION REMINDERS AND CONSIDERATIONS

- Parents are encouraged to sit/listen into the club meeting.
- Not all participants have access to technology to participate in virtual connections. *This means that 4-H club meetings cannot be mandatory and will not count against attendance policies.*
- 4-H members should attend virtual connections from their own home and not congregate with others for the virtual meeting.
- Virtual connections should have a purpose and educational value. They can be used to conduct 4-H club business meetings, host a team practice, conduct a public speaking event or project workshop.
- Depending on the content of the virtual connection, additional resources may need to be shared. Consider webpages, pdfs or other documents that can support the topic/subject. They can be shared in the connection communications or links provided in the virtual connection chat. Be sure you review the resources prior to sharing to assure they are of high quality, age-appropriate and shareable.

Be aware of copyright requirements for any document you wish to share.

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4-H GROWS HERE