Frequently Asked Questions for 4-H

What is 4-H?
4-H is a community of young people across America who are learning leadership, citizenship, and life skills. 4-H is a national organization that helps young people develop knowledge and skills to become productive citizens. It also helps them be more capable to meet the diversities and challenges of today's society. 4-H allows youth and adults to work together to design programs that will teach skills for living. 4-H upholds the theme of "learning by doing." It reaches people in their own neighborhoods with delivery methods suitable to their needs and also provides a stronger bond between family members. In most states, you can join 4-H if you are between the ages of 8-18. Some states like Maryland have special age-appropriate programs designed especially for younger kids age 5-7 called Clovers.

Isn't 4-H just for farm kids?
No! 4-H is for all young people, regardless of where they live, what their backgrounds are, or what interests them. Today in Maryland most 4-H members are from urban areas and they participate in projects to learn many different life skills.

What do the H's stand for?
Head, Heart, Hands and Health.

Members pledge:
"I Pledge
My head to clearer thinking
My heart to greater loyalty
My hands to larger service
My health the better living, for my club, my community, my country and my world."

What are the 4-H emblem, motto, and slogan?
A green four-leaf clover with a white "H" on each clover leaf is the 4-H emblem. Green and white are the colors. The 4-H motto is "To Make the Best Better." The 4-H slogan is "Learn By Doing."

Who conducts 4-H?
The Wicomico County, Maryland 4-H program is conducted by the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Maryland, and the Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. County and regional 4-H programs are directed by professional Extension staff who train and support the volunteers who work with 4-H members. Offices are located in every county in Maryland.

Who funds 4-H?
University of Maryland Extension receives funding from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the state of Maryland, and local county boards.
What does it cost to join?
4-H has a $10 yearly membership registration fee, there is no required uniform. There may be minimal costs for project manuals or some 4-H activities or events.

Why do young people like 4-H?
4-H provides a chance to learn new things, develop new skills, travel to new places, experience new situations, make new friends, and most importantly have lots of fun.

How do you join?
Call the Wicomico County Extension office at 410-749-6141 and contact 4-H Educator Amy Rhodes or 4-H Program Assistant Barbara Barga to see if there is a club near you. If not, a few interested young people, with an adult or two to help them, may start a new club.

What is a club?
A club is a group of five or more young people ages 5 to 18, guided by an adult leader. Clubs meet for at least six sessions during the year and have a planned program. Members elect officers and each member chooses one or more projects. Each club has a constitution. A club may explore a single subject or several subjects. 4-H members elect club officers, conduct their own business, work together on community service activities, meet new friends, and most important, have lots of fun.

Where do 4-H clubs meet?
A 4-H club may be organized on a community or neighborhood basis and use local facilities or members' homes. Also it can be organized within a school using the school's facilities, time, and staff. Any place large enough and convenient for the club members is a good choice. There are clubs meeting all over Wicomico County, from Pittsville to Delmar. Just give us a call and find out if there is one near your house.

Do I have to live in Wicomico County to participate?
No, you can live in any county or even a neighboring state like Delaware of Virginia.

How often do clubs meet?
Most clubs meet once or twice a month all year long, depending on what the group wants to do. Sometimes members may have to be enrolled in a project by a certain time to be eligible for a certain activity such as the 4-H fair.

When do clubs meet and how long do meetings last?
This depends on the group. Many community clubs meet for an hour or two after school, in the evening, or on Saturday. The most important thing is to have a regular time to get together. School clubs may meet for an hour or two during the school day.

How big should a club be?
This depends on the age of the members, the places they have to meet, and the leadership available. The ideal club is big enough to have fun together, but small enough for everyone to feel part of the group. The average Wicomico County 4-H club is 5 to 25 members.

Should 4-H clubs have dues?
This depends on their need for money. If a club wants money for some activities, it usually charges dues or has fundraising activities.

What are 4-H projects?
4-H projects are challenging, but practical, planned courses of study with learning experiences centered around a specific subject. Members usually work on a project (subject area) for a year. Hands-on, learn-by-doing involvement is the most important aspect of a project. Making, growing, caring for, observing, and participating are all involved in 4-H projects. Project books can be found on www.n4hccs.org. Exciting, experientially-based 4-HCCS curriculum products for youth and volunteers are available on this site.
What does a 4-H project cost?
It varies. Members are responsible for the cost of supplies for projects. Some projects might use supplies from around the house while others might invest more in their project. The cost of the project should be realistic to the family situation.

Are 4-H members expected to do their own project work?
Yes, with help. Members are expected to select at least one project and complete one or more learning experiences related to the project during the year. 4-H is a "learn by doing" program. Leaders, junior leaders, and parents may tell or show members how, but members are expected to learn to do things themselves.

Are projects done individually or as a group?
Both. It varies among projects and among clubs. Some projects are more fun done as a group, while others, will be done individually. Some clubs have several project leaders and do specific project work at club meetings while others rely on parents and others to help members individually.

What is an exhibit?
An exhibit is an object or display designed to show something that the members have accomplished. Ideally it motivates members to learn and to have fun in a 4-H project. An exhibit is not an end in itself nor does it measure all the learning that takes place in a project. Self-recognition and self-satisfaction for having completed a project are important rewards. A ribbon is only one measure of success. Opportunities to display exhibits are at the Wicomico Farm and Home Show, other county fairs, and the MD State Fair.

What do 4-H clubs do at meetings?
4-H clubs usually participate in four general kinds of activities during the meeting. They have a business meeting, special interest programs, project work, and recreation or social activities. Clubs may have a little business to conduct, may work on their projects for a while, and then play a game or two. Sometimes the whole meeting is devoted to one topic.

What are 4-H leaders?
Volunteer leaders are the backbone of the 4-H program. They are adults who work voluntarily with a group of 4-H members. Volunteers go through a youth protection application and screening process before they are enrolled as leaders. Additionally, volunteers receive training in skills they will need to become successful 4-H volunteers.

Are there different kinds of leaders?
There are three general categories of local 4-H volunteers: organizational leaders, project leaders, and activity leaders. Organizational leaders guide the overall organization of the club, help it function smoothly, and maintain communications among the member families and between the club and the Extension unit office. Project leaders work with members enrolled in a specific project or project area, assisting them to plan and carry out experiences that will help them reach their learning goals in the project. Activity leaders work with members in planning and carrying out specific activities for the club as a whole. Many volunteers carry the weight of all three categories.

How many leaders should a 4-H club have?
That depends on the size of the club and the age of the members. At least two are recommended.

Where would one learn how to be a 4-H leader?
The Wicomico County Extension office is the first point of contact 410-749-6141. The Wicomico 4-H staff includes an educator, program assistant and secretarial help. After completing the screening process, the volunteer would be enrolled and an orientation would be provided. Leaders are invited to special training meetings and provided with the materials needed to conduct a 4-H club. An experienced leader nearby may also help with questions.

What's expected of parents?
Children need parental encouragement to get them started in 4-H and to keep them involved in the program in later years. Parents can help by:
- **Sharing** - provide encouragement and take interest in 4-H projects and activities. Listen, look, and offer suggestions, but avoid the temptation to "take over" and do things. Children learn by their mistakes as well as successes.
- **Preparing** - assist by helping children understand the value of doing projects, having duties in the club, and following through on responsibilities as expected by others.
- **Being there** - Children gain more from 4-H by attending meetings regularly and getting involved in 4-H activities. Parents are welcome at meetings and are encouraged to stay and observe. Lend a hand whenever possible. However, remember that 4-H clubs are for kids.
- **Caring** - arrange to participate whenever possible. Parents' presence shows the child that what he or she is doing is very important.

**Does 4-H offer special events?**
Yes, throughout the year the Wicomico 4-H program offers classes, workshops, lock-ins, day and overnight camps, trips and many new activities. These events are open to 4-Her’s and their friends, and to the public.

**How do I learn more about 4-H once my child joins?**
Ask questions of the club organizational leader, the Extension office 410-749-6141, or other parents and members. Many resources are also on the web. Explore the Wicomico County 4-H site or The Maryland State 4-H website.