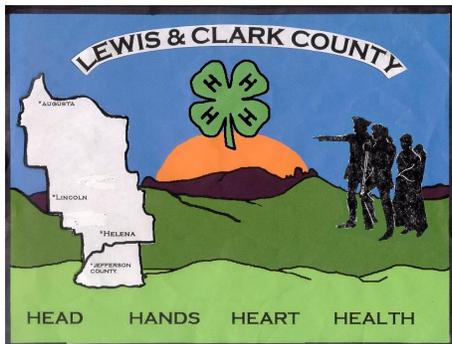




Lewis & Clark County 4-H Program Overview

Welcome to Lewis and Clark County 4-H!

This guide is a resource to the structure of the county 4-H program. 4-H strives to create a positive and rewarding hands-on learning environment for youth through a variety of different settings. If there are ever any questions regarding 4-H call the Lewis & Clark County Extension Office at 406-447-8346.



MEMBERSHIP

Lewis & Clark County 4-H has two options for membership: Cloverbuds for ages 6–8 years and full membership for ages 8–18 years. The 4-H year runs from October 1 to September 30, and their 4-H age is determined as of October 1.

Cloverbuds

- ◆ Age: 6-8 years
- ◆ Emphasizes learning through having fun. Meetings involved non-competitive, hands-on exposure to activities, project areas and the concept of 4-H.
- ◆ Not all youth mature at the same rate and parents have some flexibility in determining when a child is ready for full 4-H membership. In the 4-H year in which the child turns 9, the child is eligible to enroll either as a Cloverbud or as a regular 4-H member.

Full Membership

- ◆ Age: Youth must turn 9 years during the 4-H year and not turned 19 prior to October 1.
- ◆ For official enrollment, youth enroll as a member of a 4-H club in Lewis & Clark County and choose 4-H project(s) of interest for that year.

Yearly Dues

- ◆ Members and Cloverbuds—\$10.00
- ◆ Volunteer Leaders—\$10.00
- ◆ Certified Volunteer Leaders—additional \$12.00 one time fee.
- ◆ Some project areas may ask for additional fees to provide workshops, clinics and educational experiences for youth.

CLUBS

The first step of being involved in 4-H is finding a club that best fits the family. There are many active clubs in Lewis & Clark County.

- ◆ 4-H members in Lewis & Clark County must be part of a club and are encouraged to actively participate in that club. A 4-H Club is a group of members from a variety of ages and backgrounds who come together to plan club activities for community service, recreation and learning.
- ◆ Club meetings are very important for attaining information pertinent to deadlines, upcoming activities and provide an opportunity for learning to work together, developing leadership and communication skills.
- ◆ Clubs are designed to be operated by youth. However, adult leaders receive information from the Extension Office and assist in many ways.



PROJECTS

4-H projects allow youth to explore the content area through hands-on learning and youth-adult partnerships. Here are a few tips when selecting projects:

- ◆ Most project areas have various levels (Level 1,2,3, etc.) as well as an “Independent Study” phase, allowing youth to repeatedly sign up for the same project area, but continue to face new challenges and rewards. Many of these projects will have workshops, competitive events, and/or exhibitions at some point in the year.
- ◆ For a complete listing of projects, refer to the “Clover,” a publication of the Montana 4-H Center for Youth Development available through the Extension Office. 4-H once had a very agricultural basis, but now offers a wide array of project areas from Robotics to Dog to Photography to Sewing & Textiles and more. The sky is the limit for 4-H projects.
- ◆ Be careful not to take too many projects too quickly as projects can take a lot of time and energy. It is often easier to start slow and take on more projects as a member matures. Projects that are taken over numerous years (often early projects will be taken throughout a 10-year membership) end up being areas of strength.

MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Montana 4-H strives to provide continued levels of involvement and challenges for members as they mature. Unfortunately, many members miss out on activities and events uniquely available to older members, as they drop out after achieving the goals laid out for them in their earlier years. Most senior members will tell you that the greatest benefits, most

fun and biggest opportunities came in the latter half of their 4-H career. Lewis & Clark County 4-H provides several opportunities unique to teen 4-H members. Parents and members are encouraged to maintain their involvement and capitalize on these many great opportunities.

4-H PROGRAM LEADERSHIP

- ◆ The Lewis & Clark County 4-H Leaders’ Council is made up volunteers and members who help determine the direction of 4-H in Lewis & Clark County.
- ◆ The 4-H/Youth Development Extension Agent is a fulltime employee of Montana State University Extension who oversees the entire program.
- ◆ The program is support by many adult volunteers who give them time to support the youth in 4-H. Most volunteers are club organizational or project leaders. Adult volunteers serve as a guide and mentor by teaching youth practical life skills. Volunteers working with youth have completed a background check.

COUNTY EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Besides Club meetings and activities, there are a variety of other opportunities for youth in 4-H to participate.

Project Workshops

- ◆ In many 4-H project areas, volunteer leaders have developed interactive, hands-on workshops that allow members from any club to come together for a collaborative learning experience.
- ◆ Each project lends itself to a slightly different time-line and basic structure. Information regarding dates, times, and locations are available in the monthly 4-H Newsletter. If there are costs associated with the workshop for materials, rental, etc. there will generally be a fee.
- ◆ If there is not currently a leader for an area youth and parents are encouraged to help recruit a volunteer to coordinate project activities.



Record Books

- ◆ 4-H has always placed an emphasis on record books. They're an important part of completing each project and the educational process of 4-H. They help youth set goals, monitor progress, and become a record of years in 4-H.
- ◆ Record book forms are available in hard copy or electronic format for your convenience. Hard copies can be ordered at a cost through your club leader or the Extension Office. An electronic version of the forms can be found online at <http://montana4h.org/#resource:Forms> for free.
- ◆ The "My 4-H Year" record is used every year regardless of the projects enrolled. A separate "Project & Financial Journal" is used for each project. If enrolled in an animal project an "Animal Record" is needed.
- ◆ Many youth find record books extremely valuable as they begin applying for scholarships and colleges.
- ◆ It is always easier to work on record books throughout the 4-H year rather than waiting until right before the deadline.

4-H Camp

- ◆ Only full 4-H members are eligible.
- ◆ Many youth find camp to be the highlight of their 4-H year.
- ◆ Education is the ultimate goal, but a fun atmosphere is the key to this experience. Themes, workshop and experiences vary each year. Youth come away with new friends, skills and great confidence in themselves.

Last Chance Stampede, Horse Show & Fair

- ◆ Participation in the Fair is not required for successful completion of a 4-H project. However, this is one of the best avenues for recognition of the member's hard work throughout the 4-H year.
- ◆ Projects will be on display in a variety of settings. Posters, cooked items, handcrafted items, and educational exhibits will be prepared and judged prior to public display. Livestock will be on display with youth caring for and showing them throughout the week.
- ◆ Both indoor exhibits and market livestock have an opportunity to sell their quality projects through a live Auction held at the end of Fair week.

- ◆ To participate in Fair, youth must complete a Fair entry form due June 15. Information, including rules, is published every spring in the Fair Exhibitors Handbook.

Awards Night

This is an opportunity to recognize the achievements made by individual 4-H members and volunteer leaders. Record book completion is required for recognition. Individual achievement is the goal here rather than peer-to-peer competition.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Club Officers

Clubs offer an opportunity for members to serve in a number of leadership positions. These may include president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, historian, recreation leader and others.

Teen Leaders

Teen Leadership is an actual project area as well as an experience. As members move into their teen years, they should consider this as an opportunity to build into the lives of younger members. Teen leaders can take an active role in planning project meetings, organizing county and club activities, and helping younger members.



Camp Counselors

After the age of 14, 4-H members are no longer eligible to attend camp as campers, but instead can apply to be Camp Counselors. These counselors are responsible for planning and implementing camp, and providing a positive learning experience for younger members.

Ambassadors

County Ambassadors are senior 4-H members who are the voice of 4-H. They promote 4-H and strive to provide a better 4-H experience in whatever ways they can imagine and implement.

STATEWIDE EVENTS

Montana 4-H Recreation Lab

Held every year in a rotating location across the state, this event is open to 4-H members age 13 or older. The focus is on learning to coordinate activities and to send youth home with new activities and ideas for use in their local clubs and camps.

Montana 4-H Congress

This event is held for senior 4-H members every year in Bozeman on the Montana State University campus. Students can qualify to participate in everything from Livestock Judging to Public Speaking to the Fashion Review to Stir-Ups, a cooking and nutrition event. Members can also attend to assist with competitions or activities and attend leadership workshops. Between 300-400 members from across the state come together to compete, socialize, participate in leadership workshops, and experience campus life.

Montana Citizenship Seminar

Citizenship Seminar is a Citizenship-in-Action (CIA) event designed to educate, inspire and showcase outstanding 4-H youth as they learn and experience the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Delegates participate in a mock trial, create and debate bills, interview elected officials, participate in a service learning project and find out first-hand what it means to be a public servant and representative of the people. Citizenship Seminar is held in Helena in the years when the legislature is in session.

Legislative Breakfast

The Breakfast provides an opportunity to educate Montana legislators about the work and successes of 4-H and MSU Extension. It brings youth and adult constituents from across the state together to share ideas, issues and concerns. Organized by Montanans for 4-H, it is held during the years when the legislature is in session.

Montana 4-H Leadership Forum

This event is held annually at locations around the state to provide a forum for the gathering of ideas for leaders and junior leaders. The Forum includes workshops on a variety of topics related to 4-H projects and to overall youth development, as well as, updates on 4-H programming and recognition for outstanding achievements. This is an exciting event for leaders, new and old, and provides a wonderful opportunity to meet others from across the state.



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